THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The Ring®

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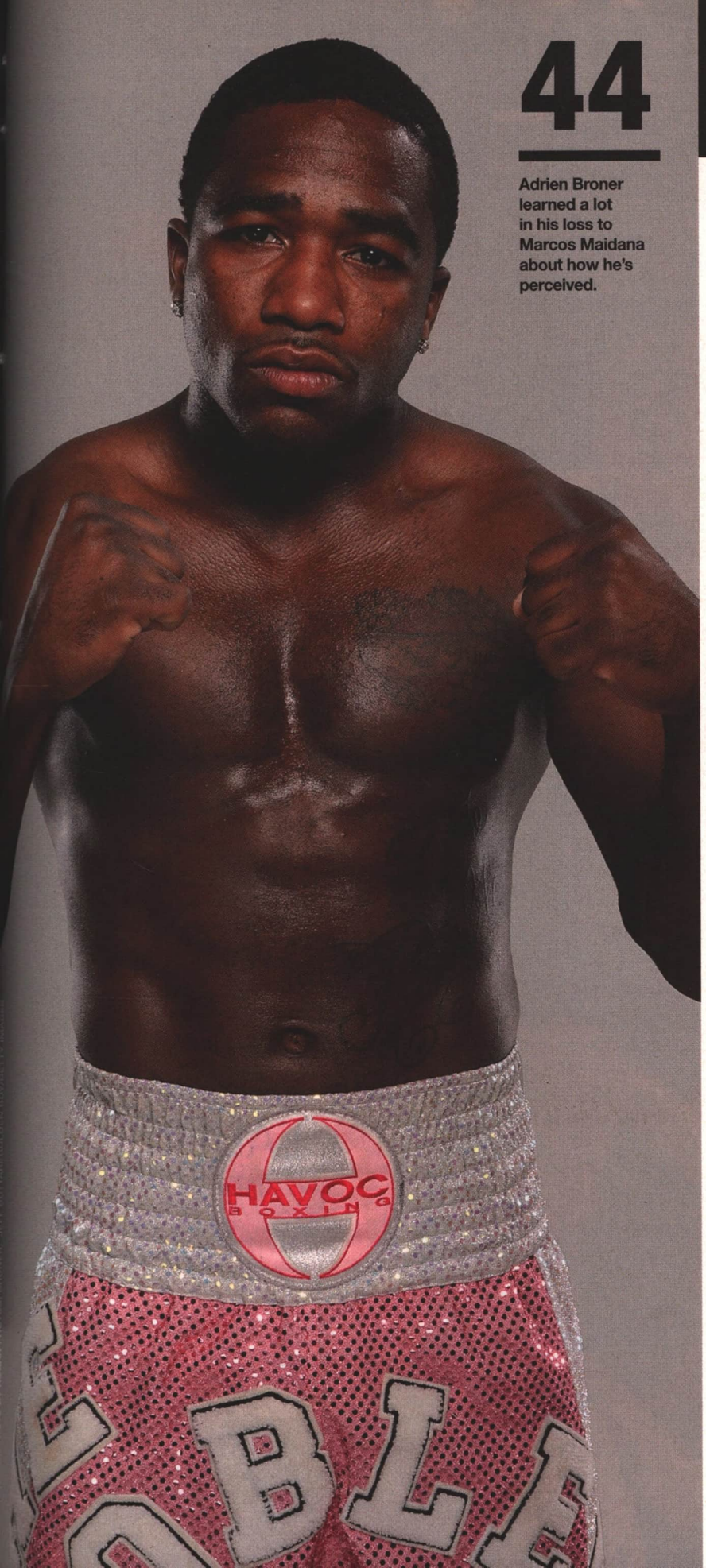

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Light heavyweight contender Jean Pascal had a good night on Jan. 18 in Montreal.

The RING

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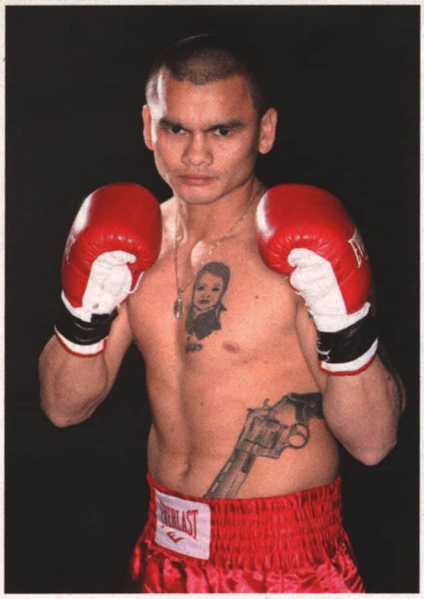
By **Michael Rosenthal**



WHY WE LOVE MAIDANA

One unusual aspect about boxing is that a fighter doesn't have to be immensely talented to be universally respected. Arturo Gatti, limited in ability but infinitely courageous, comes to mind.

So does Marcos Maidana, our cover boy this month.

Everyone knows that Maidana isn't the best boxer in the world, including Maidana. Of course, he has solid skills or he wouldn't be an elite fighter, but he reminds no one of Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Maidana makes his living primarily as a warrior, one who fights exclusively in attack mode, would willingly die before giving up and has the kind of two-fisted punching power that discombobulates opponents and makes fans drool.

The soft-spoken Argentine doesn't always win, which really isn't relevant to how he's perceived. The point here is that fans feed off his energy and his knack for generating drama, the lifeblood of the boxing business.

Consider his fight against Victor Ortiz in 2009, which launched him into international prominence. Maidana went down three times but put Ortiz down twice and made him quit. High drama.

Consider his fight against Amir Khan in 2010. Khan, the much quicker and skillful of the two, was dominating when Maidana hurt him badly with a right and followed with a fierce barrage in the 10th round. Khan survived and won, but Maidana provided the thrills.

And, finally, consider his fight against rising star Adrien Broner in December. Maidana provided the usual ingredients – passion, fearlessness, power. He went a step further this time, though.

Maidana also entered the ring with an excellent game plan and, it turned out, a vulnerable opponent. The underdog pounced on Broner from the beginning, hurt him and never let up, allowing an overwhelmed Broner little opportunity to build momentum.

The result stunned Broner and the boxing world: Maidana by a one-sided decision, 117-109, 115-109 and 115-110.

And the impact of that victory didn't end there. Maidana pummeled an anti-hero, a brash, often crude upstart whose boasting outpaced his accomplishments. And when you beat down an anti-hero, you're a hero, which is exactly what Maidana was that night to many people.

Maidana provides drama in one fight after another, beats up braggarts when the opportunity presents itself and doesn't do much talking himself. He just fights ... hard ... every time he steps into the ring.

It's no wonder fans are in love with the guy.

Takashi Uchiyama (right) survived a knockdown in a wild 10th round to outpoint Daiki Kaneko and retain his WBA junior lightweight title on Dec. 31 in Tokyo. It was Uchiyama's eighth successful defense.

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Floyd Mayweather Jr. was well received at the Dube Boxing Gym in Soweto. The world's No. 1 fighter traveled halfway around the world to help revitalize the sport in South Africa.

Vitali Klitschko was sprayed with a fire extinguisher during a demonstration in Ukraine that turned violent. Klitschko, a presidential candidate, is fighting to reform a corrupt government.

COME OUT WRITING

GIVE BRADLEY CREDIT

Tim Bradley is about to fight Manny Pacquiao again in April. That means his last four fights were Pacman, Ruslan Provodnikov, Juan Manual Marquez, and Pacman again. That is an amazing schedule of fighters. This dude has balls. When was the last time in boxing a fighter fought a murderers row like this? I can't think of a single fighter who has.

Dominick Carrero
Ballston Lake, N.Y.

ONE VOTE FOR HOPKINS

Floyd Maywweather Jr. is a great fighter – no question. But I feel the best fighter of this era is Bernard Hopkins. One must look at all he has done as a middleweight and light heavyweight, and at what age he did it. There is a resemblance to Archie Moore here. Money is not the only measure of greatness.

Stephen Gardella
Brockton, Mass.

THE GUY WHO CAN BEAT MAYWEATHER?

I recently re-watched the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Ricky Hatton fight and thought to myself, "If Ricky had a little more power and a better chin, he might have won that bout because he was able to maul Mayweather." Then I watched Miguel Cotto do reasonably well against Floyd, and I thought, "If he was a little more persistent and a little younger, he might've beaten Floyd, too." Enter Ruslan Provodnikov, today's version of Rocky Marciano, a man with all of those missing tools. This guy would be a nightmare for Floyd because he's not going to try to counterpunch with Mayweather. He's going for the throat from Round 1. He's young, relentless, strong, rips the body, hits hard, has a granite chin and has an unbelievable desire to win. Floyd would get hit and hit often, harder and harder round by round, something Floyd's not used to – a real fight, not a counterpunching match. This is the guy who would beat Floyd, but I guarantee you Floyd's not going to fight him.

Robert Casazza
Staten Island, N.Y.

IMPRESSED AND BORED

After recently watching the Wladimir Klitschko vs. Alexander Povetkin title fight, I was impressed and bored at the same time. No one in the heavyweight division (or any division) uses Klitschko's style of fighting better than he does. He jabs constantly, throws occasional powerful combinations and then grabs, holds, then pushes down on his opponent. These are fouls in boxing, but he gets away with it constantly. Why his opponents' cornermen don't get on the referee and the governing body or commission is beyond me. Can you imagine Klitschko doing that to one of Lou Duva's boxers? Duva would punch the referee. Klitschko is one of the greatest heavyweights of all time. He has proven that with his continued dominance and longevity as champion. He's also the most boring to watch. If he had his brother Vitali's fighting spirit to go along with his intelligence and athleticism … now that would be a heavyweight worth watching.

Danny Kisner
Glen Burnie, Md.

FOND MEMORIES

The recent death of former world heavyweight champion Ken Norton brought back some fond memories for me. In 1975, Norton was training at the 5th Street Gym in Miami Beach for a match with Rico Brooks. Brooks was a fast fighter, and Norton was looking for sparring partners with a similar style of fighting. I was a 17-year-old amateur boxer at the time, and Norton used me as one of his sparring partners. Ken was always friendly and kind; a true gentleman and a credit to the sport of boxing. Our sparring matches must have paid off. Norton knocked out Brooks in one round, and I went on to score first-round knockouts over Tyrone McClary and Aldric Brown.

Sherman "Big Train" Bergman
Miami Beach, Fla.

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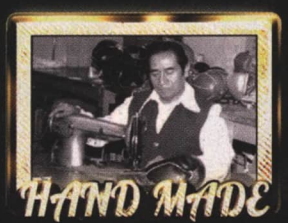

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JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES

BY THOMAS HAUSER

STEWARD BEING STEWARD

THE LATE TRAINER WAS IN TYPICAL FORM WHEN HE COMFORTED A RIVAL

I was going through some notes on my computer recently and found a story that I think is worth sharing.

On June 5, 2010, Yuri Foreman fought Miguel Cotto at Yankee Stadium. Foreman injured his knee in Round 7. The state athletic commission inspector assigned to Foreman's corner advised the referee that Yuri's trainer, Joe Grier, wanted to stop the fight. Defying logic and a hundred years of ring precedent, the referee insisted that the fight go on.

The late Emanuel Steward showed his colors after the Miguel Cotto-Yuri Foreman fight in 2010.

A severely compromised Foreman was TKO'd in Round 9.

In the aftermath of the fight, Grier was upset. He felt that he'd somehow failed his fighter. Then, five days after the bout, he received a telephone call from Cotto's trainer, Emanuel Steward.

Steward imparted some choice words regarding the referee's handling of the contest. He also told Grier that he admired the job he had done in developing Foreman as a fighter and the way he had handled himself on fight night.

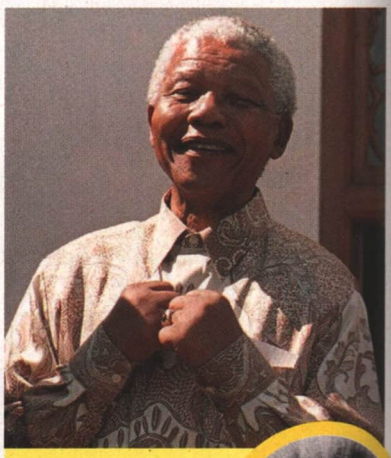
"Emanuel was so nice," Grier said afterward. "I never thought I'd hear from him. I thought it would be like, he's a big trainer, his guy won, and he'd go on his way without ever looking back. The fact that he took the time to call and the things he said made me feel so good."

That was Emanuel Steward. ★

The Cotto-Foreman fight gave Steward the opportunity to reach out to a fellow trainer.

★ ***The World Boxing Council has just published a book entitled* Ring Official's Basic Guidelines. *Highlights include the following advice for referees: "Don't look at the ring girls" and "don't forget to take an Imodium [anti-diarrhea medicine]."*** ★

MANDELA BEAT TO THE PUNCH



The death of Nelson Mandela on Dec. 5 engendered a global outpouring of remembrance and love.

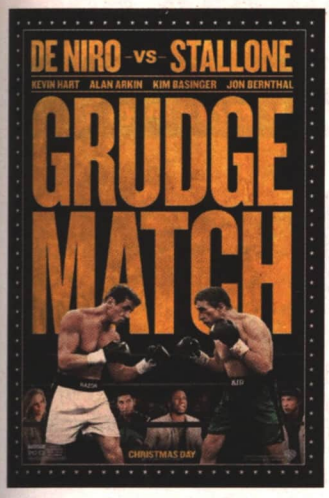
Mandela was a worldwide symbol of dignity, perseverance, and equality for all. People from all walks of life looked upon him as one of their own. That's true of the boxing community as well.

Mandela boxed as an amateur and was a devotee of the sweet science throughout his life. Over the years, he met with Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Lennox Lewis, Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield, among others.

That leads to a whimsical memory.

Mandela sometimes gave visitors a T-shirt bearing the prison number he wore during his 27 years of incarceration: 46664.

When Don King met Mandela, he gave "Madiba" a similar gift: a T-shirt emblazoned with "125734," the number that Don wore for four years at the Marion Correctional Institute in Ohio. ★



NOT GOOD IN THE END

I attended a screening of *Grudge Match* with a group of high school students. At the end of the film, one of the students said to a friend, "Man, that was good until the end, which was stupid."

My sentiments exactly.

I'm hard-pressed to think of an actor who owes more to a single role than Sylvester Stallone owes to Rocky. For Robert DeNiro, his role as Jake LaMotta in *Raging Bull* is one in a long line of celebrated performances. The two actors teamed up to tell the story of Henry Sharp (Stallone) and Billy McDonnen (DeNiro), ex-fighters in their 60s who split two bouts 30 years earlier and are forced by circumstances into a rubber match.

Grudge Match doesn't take itself too seriously. It's funny with poignancy and surprising drama. The screenplay and performances are good enough that it's easy to suspend disbelief. There's suspense as to who will win the climactic bout.

Then the fight starts, and the film devolves into silliness.

On a snowy Saturday in December, Stallone and DeNiro were at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Manhattan to talk about *Grudge Match*. For 40 minutes, they and cast members Kevin Hart, Alan Arkin and Kim Basinger answered questions from the media.

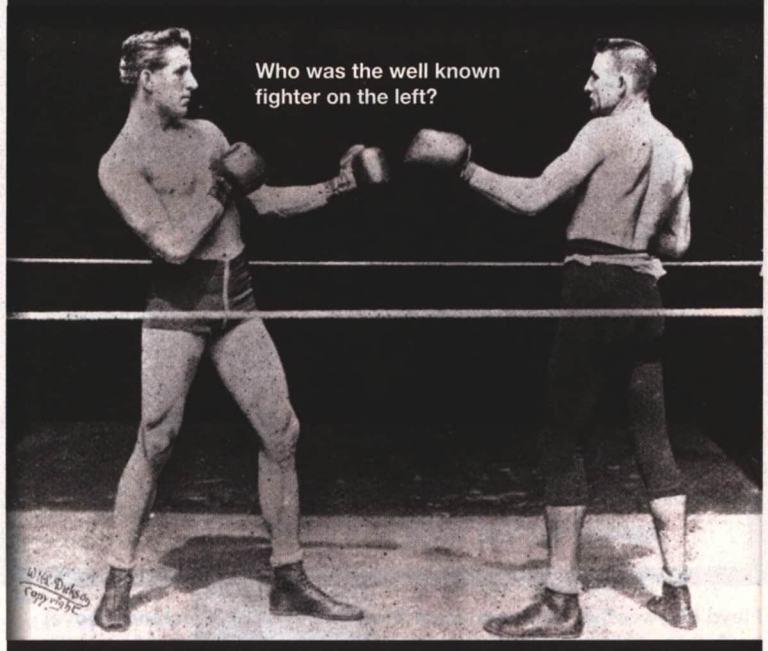
DeNiro had the look of a man who's really bored at press conferences. Listening to him talk, one had the feeling that he approached *Grudge Match* tongue-in-cheek while Stallone approached it as high drama. Both men expressed genuine respect for boxing and boxers.

Asked to comment on the respective merits of *Rocky* and *Raging Bull*, Stallone spoke effusively about DeNiro's towering performance as LaMotta. When it was DeNiro's turn to answer, he said simply, "They're two different styles of films."

Kim Basinger looked very pretty. ★

QUICK QUIZ

1. THE FIRST BOXING FILM EVER MADE WAS A SPARRING SESSION BETWEEN MIKE LEONARD AND JACK CUSHING FILMED BY THOMAS EDISON. TWO MONTHS LATER, ON SEPT. 7, 1894, EDISON SOUGHT TO MONETIZE HIS NEWLY INVENTED MOVING PICTURE CAMERA BY PAYING A WELL-KNOWN FIGHTER TO COME TO HIS STUDIO AND BOX AN EXHIBITION AGAINST AN UNKNOWN PUGILIST NAMED PETER COURTNEY THAT WOULD BE SHOWN IN PEEPSHOWS AROUND THE COUNTRY. WHO WAS THE WELL KNOWN FIGHTER?



2. WHAT WAS THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHT TO BE TRANSMITTED LIVE ON RADIO?

3. JOE LOUIS SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED HIS WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP 25 TIMES, BUT AGAINST ONLY 20 CHALLENGERS. WHO DID HE DEFEND AGAINST TWICE?

QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS:

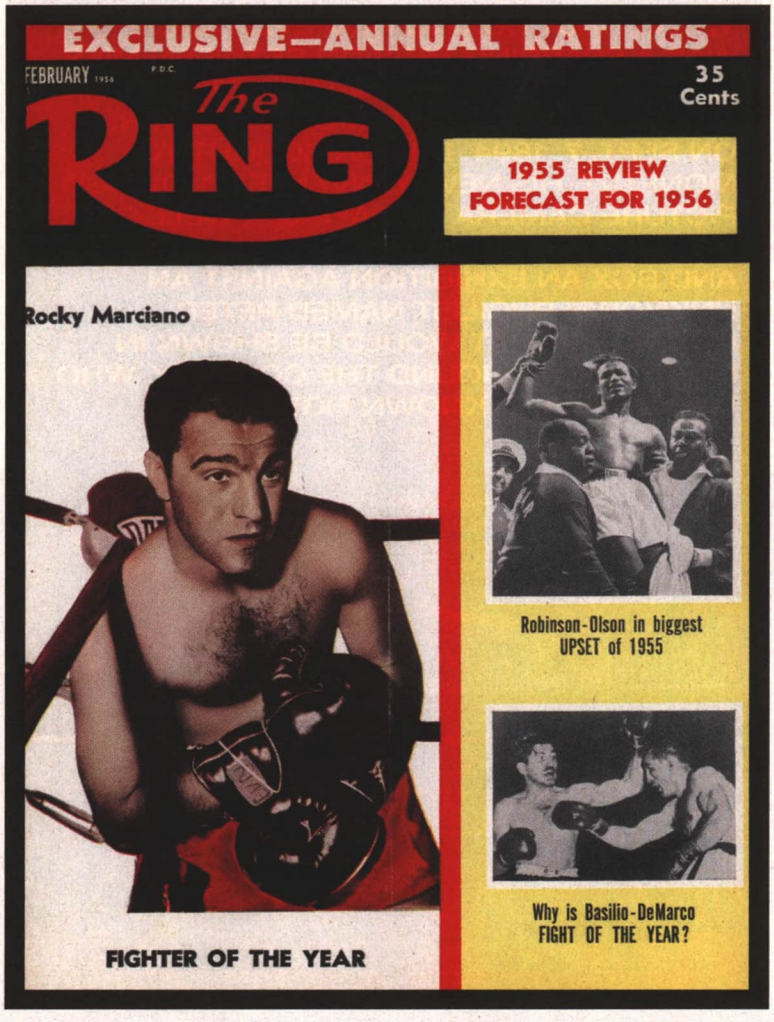
1. Former heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan declined Edison's offer. So Edison retained the services of the man who'd beaten Sullivan, the reigning heavyweight champion of the world, James Corbett.

2. The first world championship fight to be heard live on radio was Jack Dempsey's successful title defense against Georges Carpentier on July 2, 1921.

3. Louis successfully defended his championship twice against Buddy Baer, Abe Simon, Arturo Godoy, Billy Conn and Jersey Joe Walcott.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Straight Writes and Jabs: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES



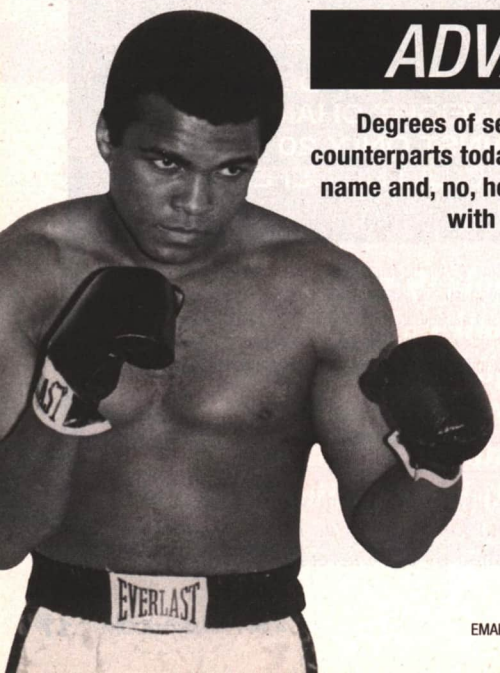
Floyd Mayweather Jr. could equal the feat of Rocky Marciano (above) next year.

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST:

10

This month: Floyd Mayweather Jr. announced that his last fight will take place in September 2015. That means, if he fights four more times – May 2014, September 2014, May 2015 and September 2015 – and remains unbeaten, he will finish his career tied with Rocky Marciano atop the list of fighters who retired with perfect records. This would be the list (ranked by number of victories).

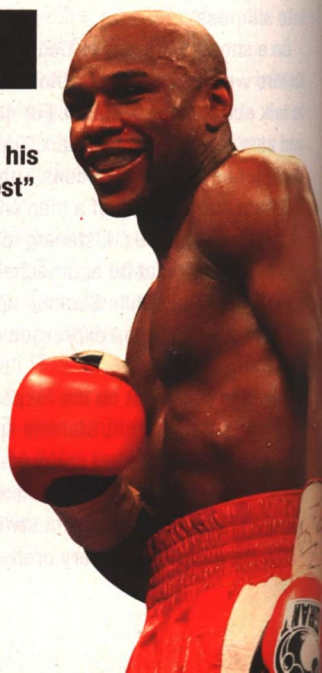
1T.	**49-0**	Rocky Marciano
	49-0	Floyd Mayweather Jr.
3.	**46-0**	Joe Calzaghe
4.	**43-0**	Samson Dutch Boy Gym
5.	**34-0**	Sven Ottke
6.	**29-0**	Harry Simon
7.	**28-0**	Michael Loewe
8.	**27-0**	Edwin Valero
9.	**24-0**	Scott Daley
10T.	**24-0**	George Kandelaki
	24-0	Pichit Sithbanprachan



ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their counterparts today. This month, reader Conan O'Brien (yes, that's his name and, no, he's not the talk show host) connects "The Greatest" with the greatest active fighter in only seven steps.

« **MUHAMMAD ALI** fought …
GEORGE FOREMAN, who fought …
EVANDER HOLYFIELD, who fought …
JAMES TONEY who fought …
ROY JONES JR., who fought …
BERNARD HOPKINS, who fought …
OSCAR DE LA HOYA, who fought …
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. »



EMAIL YOUR ADVANCED DEGREES TO COMEOUTWRITING@SEPUBLICATIONS.COM.

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Good

I didn't know whether to file this under good or worse. Former heavyweight titleholder Vitali Klitschko, a presidential candidate in his native Ukraine, is among those seeking to reform a corrupt government. It was in that capacity that he recently led a massive protest of new laws prohibiting most peaceful demonstrations, a heavy-handed move by the government to quell dissension as the country's fate remains in question. At least two people were killed in clashes with police. Klitschko didn't emerge unscathed. Images (both still and video) of the giant former heavyweight champ being sprayed with a fire extinguisher as he was speaking to a crowd were shocking, although it wasn't clear who sprayed him. What was abundantly clear is that Klitschko is risking his life for the future of his country. All boxing fans admire anyone brave enough to step through the ropes to do battle. Klitschko is going an enormous step further. THE RING wishes one of our own Godspeed.

BAD

Countless fighters have been portrayed as the next great thing only to fall flat when they take on an elite opponent. Lucian Bute is the latest example. He was a very good amateur and won his first 30 pro fights, holding the IBF super middleweight title for more than four years in the process. Then everything changed in an instant. He was hurt by Carl Froch in a May 2012 fight, couldn't recover and has never been the same. Bute's critics weren't shocked. He was largely untested going into the Froch fight. Obviously he was overrated. And it gets worse. Bute fought skittishly against Jean Pascal in January, as if he was afraid of getting hurt. That would explain why he didn't let his hands go enough to make the fight competitive. He obviously doubts his own ability. And a fighter who doubts himself has no chance to succeed, especially at the highest level of the sport. Bute could be finished as an elite fighter, which is a shame. At his best – against second-tier opponents – he was fun to watch.

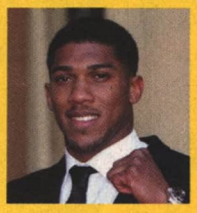
WORSE

Evander Holyfield has a right to his opinions on homosexuality, which are based on his religious beliefs. He also has the right to express them, as he did recently on Celebrity Big Brother in the U.K. Holyfield said homosexuality "ain't normal" and then compared it to a disability that can be fixed. The fact is openly gay people are here to stay and deserve the same dignity and respect that those in other segments of society receive. They are who they are; they don't need to be fixed. And to suggest so only feeds the fire of those who would discriminate against them. I don't think that was Holyfield's intention; I believe he was merely expressing his beliefs. Still, he should know better. To his credit Holyfield later apologized for his comments. Hopefully he grew as a person as a result of the unfortunate incident.

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

By **Anson Wainwright**



ANTHONY JOSHUA

2012 Olympic gold medalist, super heavyweight

MUSIC – "My favorite artist has to be Jay-Z. The reason I say Jay-Z is because he has become bigger than the music industry, and I can respect his rise to success, never neglecting his music. The foundation of it all." ★ **CAR** – "I own an Audi A3 Diesel. I would like to own a Jaguar XS or XF fully loaded in black." ★ **FOOD** – "I like to eat salmon and mash potato with veg." ★ **TATTOOS** – "I have a tattoo on my right shoulder. The map of Africa with 'Wisdom' inked above the map. Also the Great Britain Olympic lion logo inked in the middle of my back with the numbers '14/452' underneath." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING** – "I like Usain Bolt." ★ **MOVIE** – "My favorite movie is *The Hurricane*." ★ **VIDEO GAME** – "My favorite video game is *Fight Night Round 3*."

EGOR MEKHONTSEV

2012 Olympic gold medalist, light heavyweight

MUSIC – "I like different music: rap, hip-hop, R&B, pop, classical. Singer – Mick Jagger and The Rolling Stones." ★ **CAR** – "Audi A8." ★ **FOOD** – "Pancakes." ★ **TATTOOS** – "No tattoos." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING** – "Alexander Karelin [Greco-Roman wrestler]." ★ **MOVIE** – "*The Golden Calf [Zolotoy telyonok]*." ★ **VIDEO GAME** – "I never play computer games."

RYOTA MURATA

2012 Olympic gold medalist, middleweight

MUSIC – "I enjoy all music – classic pop music and my favorite band, Superfly." ★ **CAR** – "I own a Lexus RX 450." ★ **FOOD** – "I like meat." ★ **TATTOOS** – "None." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING** – "Ichiro Suzuki." ★ **MOVIE** – "*Life is Beautiful*." ★ **VIDEO GAME** – "*Final Fantasy XI*."

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

Could Marcos Maidana do it again? Our readers think so. We asked: What would be the result of a Marcos Maidana-Adrien Broner rematch? **Here is how you responded.**

THE PERCENTAGES:

Maidana by KO	50.8
Maidana by decision	24.4
Broner by decision	19.0
Broner by KO	4.6
Draw	1.2

Note: 3,366 readers voted

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

By **Anson Wainwright**

Whether you're talking about a single era in boxing or Mexico's entire history of fighters, Marco Antonio Barrera was one of the best. Just as important, he was a fan favorite because of his string of entertaining brawls.

The "Baby Faced Assassin" took on a who's who of the best fighters from 112 to 140 pounds in a career that spanned more than 20 years, winning four world titles and going 21-4 in championship fights along the way to establish hall of fame credentials.

Barrera, who turned pro at 15, won the first 43 fights of his career. That includes a victory over Daniel Jimenez to win the WBO junior featherweight title in 1995 and eight successful defenses.

Then he ran into trouble, losing his title and consecutive fights to the slick Junior Jones in 1996 and 1997. Many believed at that time that the Mexican warrior, who had been in a number of taxing battles, was

'I WOULD HIT [MORALES] CONSTANTLY WITH SOLID PUNCHES, AND IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM LIKE IT WOULD AFFECT HIM AT ALL.'
– MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

Marco Antonio Barrera (left) said Manny Pacquiao was the fastest, hardest punching and strongest opponent he ever faced.

finished as an elite fighter.

They were wrong. Barrera reinvented himself as more of a boxer than a slugger and went on to record some of his most important victories. Of course, that includes two victories in his classic trilogy with countryman Erik Morales between 2000 and 2004.

Barrera also beat the likes of Naseem Hamed, Johnny Tapia, Kevin Kelley and Paulie Ayala but lost twice to Manny Pacquiao and once to Juan Manuel Marquez. He dominated the popular Hamed, who was unbeaten and favored going into their 2001 fight.

"Definitely the best fight I had and my best victory was against Naseem Hamed," Barrera told THE RING while speaking of the 2001 performance that ruined the Prince's perfect record.

Barrera, now 40, retired in 2011 with a record of 67-7 (44 knockouts) but is still very much involved in boxing. He works as an analyst for TV Azteca, owns a gym in Mexico City and manages several fighters. That includes RING-ranked junior flyweight Moises Fuentes, welterweight Luis Fernando Uribe and unbeaten junior featherweight Daniel Rosas.

THE RING recently caught up with Barrera, who gave us the best he faced in 10 key categories.

BEST OVERALL

Erik Morales: Morales is definitely the toughest opponent I have faced, because it almost seemed whenever I hit him it wouldn't hurt him. And he's a guy who would constantly give me pressure, and he hit really, really hard.

BEST BOXER

Naseem Hamed: It would definitely be Naseem Hamed, because he made it extremely difficult to hit [him]. He would come around from different angles, his boxing approach would be different from the rest, and he stood out from the rest. His punching ability from different positions and an overall tough guy to get a good, solid hit on.

BEST JAB

Morales: Morales had the best jab. When it would connect, it would be really painful. With the jab, you're not used to feeling the power, but his I would feel.

BEST DEFENSE

Juan Manuel Marquez: Definitely. He's a guy that just waits for a counterpunch. He provokes you to think you can hit him, and when you get close to hitting him, he moves so he can position himself to counterpunch you. It was extremely difficult to get hold of the guy.

BEST CHIN

Morales: I would hit him constantly with solid punches, and it just didn't seem like it would affect him at all.

BEST PUNCHER

Manny Pacquiao: Because of the speed of the punch, he'd surprise you with power.

FASTEST HANDS

Pacquiao: The speed and angles he would hit you from. And it comes with a combination of speed, power and angles.

FASTEST FEET

Pacquiao: Definitely his movement, the way he moves around, he uses every corner of the ring. He knows where to take steps to confuse you. He never comes straight forward, he comes from different angles. He stands out from the rest, definitely.

SMARTEST

Hamed: He stands out because he would bring a different approach from the rest. He would play mind games with me, he would tease me, and when I thought I had him, he would back up and move in different ways. It was more him getting in my head than anything. He would play with me.

STRONGEST

Pacquiao: It's not just the strength but the strength combined with the speed, that's what makes him different from the rest. If you add speed to anything – his movement, his punches – that's what stands out.

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CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ

Sidney Sebold

Height: 5 feet 10 inches

Weight: 135 pounds

Measurements: 34-25-36

Stance: Orthodox

Favorite Boxer: Manny Pacquiao

Hometown: Cleveland

Current location: Las Vegas

Where you've seen her: *Swimsuit USA International Model Search* finalist and *Miss Ohio* contestant.

Social Media: www.facbook.com/sidneysebold and her site is www.sidneysebold.com

Dave Allen

DO YOU WANT TO BE A RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH?
Submit photos and bio to **ringcardgirl@sepublications.com**

By David Greisman

THE OBVIOUS CHOICE

CANELO ALVAREZ WON'T PROVE MUCH BY BEATING ALFREDO ANGULO BUT A SUREFIRE ACTION FIGHT WILL APPEAL TO FANS

Here's the conundrum: You would be more likely to buy Canelo Alvarez as being a top junior middleweight if he were to beat Erislandy Lara, but you might not buy Alvarez-Lara if it were on pay-per-view.

Meanwhile, you're more likely to purchase a card headlined by Alvarez vs. Alfredo Angulo, even if Alvarez-Angulo does less to sell you on what Canelo can be.

It shouldn't come as a surprise, then, that Alvarez's first fight back since his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. is coming against Angulo — and not titleholder Carlos Molina, who was also supposedly in the running, or Lara, who will seemingly never be in the picture.

Lara, like Alvarez, is a top junior middleweight with one loss on his record. But just because Golden Boy Promotions promotes both men doesn't mean they're being promoted equally.

Alvarez makes Golden Boy much more money than Lara does. Keeping Alvarez away from Lara is in Golden Boy's best interest, then, even though it's not in Lara's.

Angulo's unrelenting pressure and formidable power punching will still make him a threat. But his style also guarantees something important: He'll be there for Alvarez to hit. That makes for a potentially fun fight, the best possible pairing for Canelo's foray into the pay-per-view kingdom (especially given that Miguel Cotto is apparently opting to challenge Sergio Martinez rather than accept a clash with Alvarez).

It won't matter too much that Angulo is coming off a loss (to Lara, at that, in what was a good, competitive bout). This upcoming match won't be a pay-per-view blockbuster, but it will be an attempt to have Alvarez's fights be seen as events, and to get people in the habit of spending more if they desire to see him.

The fight between Canelo Alvarez (left) and Alfredo Angulo (above) is attractive to fans.

But that means Molina and Lara are left out, a particularly grating reality for Lara, who continues to be treated as the runt of Golden Boy's litter and whose partnership with powerful boxing advisor Al Haymon hasn't helped land him a shot at Canelo.

The other reality, though, is that Lara hasn't helped himself. Golden Boy set him up to fail by pitting him against another counterpuncher, Austin Trout, this past December. Lara walked willingly into the trap, doing what was needed to win but doing little to wow.

It wouldn't at all surprise if Lara were eventually to end up in a rematch with Molina, or perhaps in a bout with Cornelius Bundrage, or any other opponent whose style could combine with his to bring something torturous enough to be banned under the Geneva Conventions.

As for Canelo, long gone is any fantasy of him being anywhere near the level of Mayweather. Lord knows that an Alvarez win over Mayweather would've said just as much about what Mayweather wasn't anymore, rather than what Canelo is.

What Canelo is, is a junior middleweight whose 42 wins, six successful world title defenses, multimillion-dollar paydays, stellar television ratings and potentially mainstream appeal still haven't brought us any closer to learning whether he is better

than the best of the rest of the 154-pound division.

His most notable win came against Trout, who also seemed good but was similarly unproven; how you see Trout's win over Cotto depends on how much or little you think Cotto has left. Beyond that for Alvarez is a precipitous drop: he's beaten an ancient Shane Mosley, as well as Kermit Cintron, Alfonso Gomez and Ryan Rhodes.

That doesn't mean Alvarez is a fraud — only that we still don't know whether we should buy what the hype is selling.

★

Adrien Broner's nickname is wholly appropriate. He is indeed "The Problem," except in his most recent fight that applied more to himself than it did to Marcos Maidana.

Broner should credit Maidana for having a great strategy and the ability to carry it out. But he must also blame himself. He cannot party, rap, make sex tapes, be filmed performing an indecent act on a stripper, get arrested for allegedly biting a security guard, gain a bunch of weight, lose that weight and then expect to perform at a level that justifies the size of his ego.

It's not enough to know you're very good if you don't give yourself a good chance at being great. Self-belief is not enough. Self-discipline also is key.

Broner has insisted that his efforts in the gym make up for his youthful excesses and indiscretions. Yet he hasn't convinced his idol and figurative "big brother," Floyd Mayweather Jr., who has said in interviews that Broner needs to learn "when to turn it on and when to turn it off."

Mayweather, despite his history of distractions and legal troubles, stays in incredible shape, training with intensity befitting his mantra of "hard work and dedication."

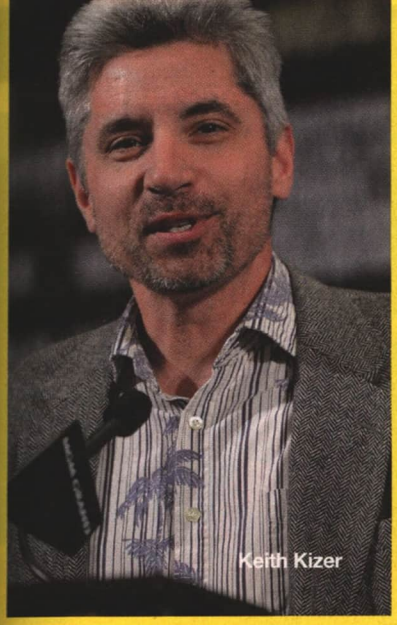
Adrien Broner (left) should focus more on boxing than his diverse outside activities.

Broner looked slow and uncertain at times against Maidana. He didn't throw enough to keep Maidana off him. Nor could he block or dodge enough of Maidana's punches. For all of his talent, and for all of the talking and taunting, there was a big difference between the way Broner tried to made Maidana look foolish in the first round — spinning Maidana and humping his rear end — and how foolish Broner looked when he hit the canvas in the second.

Maidana floored Broner twice that night, took the decision and even humped Broner in return later in the bout. Broner showed plenty of heart while fighting through adversity, but he never was able to fight his way out of it.

Now Broner wants a rematch. For the result to be any different, he must recognize why the loss happened. The only way he'll win is if Maidana beat some sense into him. RING

By **Brian Harty**


Keith Kizer

A TUMULTUOUS MONTH

Two men with great influence over professional boxing departed in January. One was WBC president **Jose Sulaiman**, who died at 82 of complications related to a heart condition. An obituary is on Page 60.

The other was **Keith Kizer**, who resigned his post after more than seven years as executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission on Jan. 10. The Commission handles the licensing of fighters and officials, arbitration and regulation in combat sports' most important city. It also appoints the executive director who, among other things, is responsible for assigning judges.

That particular duty got Kizer into hot water with boxing folks, as he appointed the now-infamous C.J. Ross to judge both **Tim Bradley-Manny Pacquiao** and **Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Canelo Alvarez,** resulting in two of the most bizarre scorecards in recent history. Kizer also irked some in the MMA world for his handling of officials and had ongoing public feuds with UFC president **Dana White** and popular referee **"Big John" McCarthy**. In addition, critics accused him of drug policies that were permissive toward fighters using testosterone and dismissive of more effective testing protocols offered by organizations other than the Commission.

Still, some pointed to his accomplishments, including record gate sales for both boxing and MMA and the introduction of instant replay in Nevada. And many praised his stances on licensing and drugs, saying he advocated more stringent policies, including out-of-competition testing, and better fighter safety. The Commission itself listed "No Deaths" as one of the "accomplishments credited to Kizer."

No replacement has yet been found. As for Kizer, who will now work for the Nevada attorney general's office, he said he's "going back to lawyering."

The Japan Boxing Commission wasn't as fortunate as its counterpart in Nevada, as 21-year-old junior bantamweight **Tesshin Okada** died on Jan. 6, 17 days after being knocked out in his professional debut.

Retirements were announced by former IBF middleweight titleholder **Darren Barker** and female WBA junior lightweight champ **Kina Malpartida.** Barker (26-2, 16 KOs), 31, who took the title from **Daniel Geale** before getting knocked out by **Felix Sturm** in his final fight, ended his career because of a recurring hip injury. Partida (15-3, 4 KOs), 33, won her belt in 2009 and successfully defended it five times. The Peruvian said she was moving on to other things and just wanted to retire on top.

Mayweather also announced his retirement ... in a way. He told guests at an event in South Africa that his last pro bout would be in September 2015. If only the last four fights in his Showtime contract could be as entertaining as the advisor wars that will now rage behind closed doors.

On the British reality-TV show *Celebrity Big Brother,* **Evander Holyfield** likened being gay to a congenital birth defect that could be fixed by a doctor (unlike the case of foot-in-mouth disease he spontaneously contracted). Needless to say, a few people were offended.

Fernando Vargas was also set to enter the world of reality TV on Jan. 26 with a show called *Welcome to Los Vargas*, about a small, impoverished village in Mexico struggling to obtain clean water and ... nah, just kidding. It's about Fernando and his "crazy and entertaining life," according to a press release.

Speaking of water, 2012 Olympian **Jose Ramirez** went to Sacramento with a group from central California's San Joaquin Valley in January with the intent of lobbying for relief from the drought that has wreaked havoc in the agriculture-based economy. Ramirez grew up in the area.

In another interesting bit of "reality," scandal (and promises of litigation) ensued after the poster for a Mexican card with three "Mexico vs. Philippines" bouts featured misleading photos for the Filipino fighters. The three relatively unknown opponents were depicted as **Reman Salim** (retired), flyweight contender **Milan Melindo** and current WBO jr. flyweight titleholder **Donnie Nietes**.

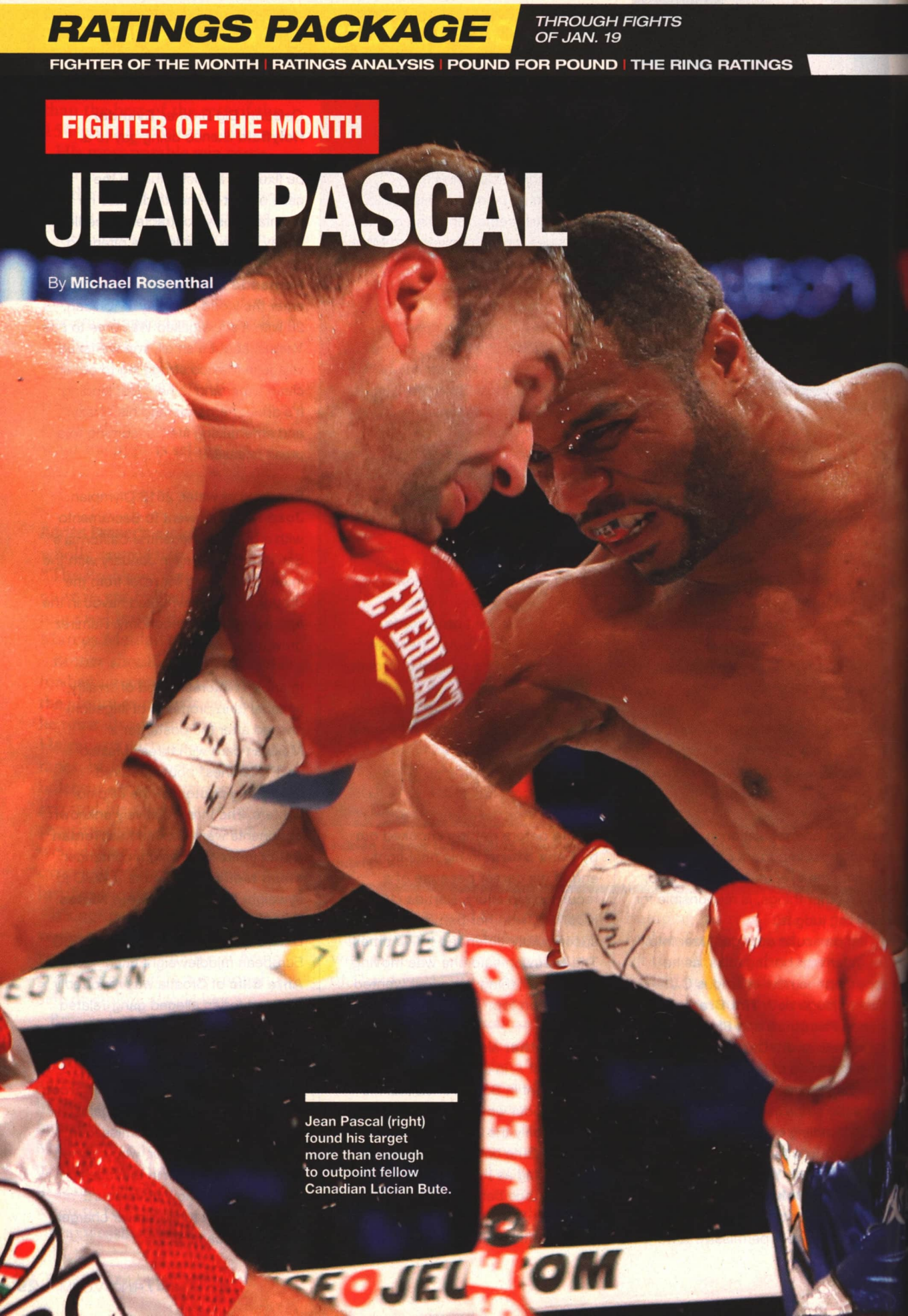
Details are sketchy, but current WBO European middleweight titleholder **Ante Bilic** of Croatia was reportedly arrested for an alleged gang-related murder and now could face 12 years in prison.

And five days after his loss to **Marcos Maidana**, assault charges against **Adrien Broner** were dismissed in Ohio when his accuser, who claimed Broner punched him in the face in 2012, failed to show up in court. Broner had yet to file similar charges against Maidana.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

JEAN PASCAL

By **Michael Rosenthal**



Jean Pascal (right) found his target more than enough to outpoint fellow Canadian Lûcian Bute.

Jean Pascal endured a rough period between late 2010 and 2012. He drew (controversially) with and then lost to a 40-something Bernard Hopkins, who took Pascal's RING light heavyweight title. Then he remained out of the ring for almost 19 months in part because of an injury.

And two victories over marginal opponents upon his return didn't do much for Pascal's credibility. No, he had to beat Lucian Bute on Jan. 18 in Montreal to reclaim his position as an elite 175-pounder.

Mission accomplished.

Pascal not only defeated his strangely listless opponent, he dominated him almost from beginning to end. The Haitian-Canadian won rounds with fierce, punishing flurries and many single shots from typically strange angles.

And Bute, also in need of a victory to resurrect his image, offered very little in return in what quickly became a one-sided, not-all-that-entertaining fight.

The only real drama came in the final round, when Pascal inexplicably stopped throwing punches – and took a beating as a result – but he survived and had built an insurmountable lead on the cards. The final scores: 118-110, 117-111 and 116-112.

For the record, Bute's weak effort obviously played a significant role in Pascal's success but the bottom line is this: Pascal easily won a fight he had to win to re-establish himself as a marketable fighter who can command big paydays.

And Pascal did it in front of his home-region fans, which undoubtedly allowed him to earn back any support he lost the past few years.

Thus, we can expect to see Pascal in a very big fight in the near future. One juicy possibility: current RING light heavyweight champion and 2013 Fighter of the Year Adonis Stevenson. It couldn't get bigger than that in Canada.

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Jean Pascal (No. 10 last month) took a big leap upward after winning his long-awaited clash with fellow Canadian Lucian Bute (No. 3 super middleweight last month) by unanimous decision. The division was shuffled afterward, with Pascal rising to No. 3; Nathan Cleverly (No. 3 last month) falling to No. 8; Beibut Shumenov going from No. 6 to No. 4; Juergen Braehmer (No. 8 last month) jumping to No. 5; Chad Dawson, Tavoris Cloud and Tony Bellew falling two ranks apiece to Nos. 6, 7 and 9, respectively; and Isaac Chilemba losing one spot to end up at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Bute's last two fights have been at light heavyweight, so he was dropped from the 168-pound ratings. The vacancy created at No. 10 was filled by Marco Antonio Periban, whose one loss was a majority decsion against Sakio Bika (No. 8 last month) for the WBC title last June.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Darren Barker (No. 5 last month) announced his retirement and was therefore removed from the list. Those below him slid upward to fill the gap, and familiar Cameroonian Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam returned at No. 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Brandon Rios (No. 7 last month) tested positive for a banned stimulant following his Nov. 23 loss to Manny Pacquiao. In accordance with THE RING's drug policy, Rios was dropped from the ratings. Everyone below him moved up a notch, and Selcuk Aydin entered at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Antonio DeMarco (No. 6 last month) beat unrated Jesus Gurrola by second-round TKO at the welterweight level. He hasn't fought at 135 for over a year, so was dropped from the ratings. That paved the way for undefeated Texan Omar Figueroa to arrive at No. 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Takashi Miura (No. 7 last month) stopped unrated Dante Jardon in nine rounds. On the strength of that and other recent victories, he was elevated to No. 4. Undefeated Cuban Rances Barthelemy (unrated last month) crashed the list at No. 3 after a second-round knockout of Argenis Mendez (No. 4 last month), who fell to No. 7. Barthelemy's arrival pushed No. 10-rated Sergio Thompson off the list.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Chris John (No. 6 last month) announced his retirement following his first and only loss, to No. 5-rated Simpiwe Vetyeka. His departure moved everyone from No. 7 Daniel Ponce De Leon to No. 10 Javier Fortuna up a rank, and allowed Nonito Donaire to return at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Kiko Martinez (No. 5 last month) successfully defended his IBF title with a ninth-round knockout of Jeffrey Mathebula (No. 2 last month). Martinez rose to No. 3 while Mathebula fell to No. 8, and WBC titleholder Leo Santa Cruz took the No. 2 spot.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No. 3 Kazuto Ioka and No. 2 Moises Fuentes swapped spots after Ioka scored a unanimous decision over Felix Alvarado (No. 7 last month) in Japan.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Ryo Miyazaki (No. 6 last month) moved up to 108 pounds, thus lifting the bottom four up a notch and leaving room for Mexico's Carlos Velarde at No. 10.

Jean Pascal (left) jumped from No. 10 to No. 3 in the 175-pound ratings after outpointing Lucian Bute in January.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

- **C** **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
  Ukraine | 61-3-0 (51 KOs)
- **1.** **KUBRAT PULEV**
  Bulgaria | 19-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **2.** **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
  Russia | 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
- **3.** **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
  Poland | 49-2-0 (29 KOs)
- **4.** **BERMANE STIVERNE**
  Canada | 23-1-1 (20 KOs)
- **5.** **TYSON FURY**
  U.K. | 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **6.** **ROBERT HELENIUS**
  Finland | 19-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **7.** **CHRIS ARREOLA**
  U.S. | 36-3-0 (31 KOs)
- **8.** **ODLANIER SOLIS**
  Cuba | 20-1-0 (13 KOs)
- **9.** **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
  Uzbekistan | 32-2-1 (20 KOs)
- **10.** **DEONTAY WILDER**
  U.S. | 30-0-0 (30 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

- **C** **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
  Cuba | 28-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **1.** **MARCO HUCK**
  Germany | 36-2-1 (25 KOs)
- **2.** **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
  Poland | 49-2-1 (35 KOs)
- **3.** **DENIS LEBEDEV**
  Russia | 25-2-0 (19 KOs)
- **4.** **OLA AFOLABI**
  U.K. | 20-3-4 (9 KOs)
- **5.** **GRIGORY DROZD**
  Russia | 37-1-0 (26 KOs)
- **6.** **ILUNGA MAKUBA**
  Congo | 15-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **7.** **FIRAT ARSLAN**
  Germany | 33-6-2 (21 KOs)
- **8.** **DMYTRO KUCHER**
  Ukraine | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **9.** **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
  Poland | 30-1-0 (22 KOs)
- **10.** **THABISO MCHUNU**
  South Africa | 14-1-0 (10 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

- **C** **ADONIS STEVENSON**
  Canada | 23-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **1.** **BERNARD HOPKINS**
  U.S. | 54-6-2 (32 KOs)
- **2.** **SERGEY KOVALEV**
  Russia | 23-0-1 (21 KOs)
- **3.** **JEAN PASCAL**
  Canada | 29-2-1 (17 KOs)
- **4.** **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
  Kazakhstan | 14-1-0 (9 KOs)
- **5.** **JUERGEN BRAEHMER**
  Germany | 42-2-0 (31 KOs)
- **6.** **CHAD DAWSON**
  U.S. | 31-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **7.** **TAVORIS CLOUD**
  U.S. | 24-2-0 (19 KOs)
- **8.** **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
  U.K. | 26-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **9.** **TONY BELLEW**
  U.K. | 20-2-1 (12 KOs)
- **10.** **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
  Malawi | 21-2-2 (9 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

- **C** **ANDRE WARD**
  U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **1.** **CARL FROCH**
  U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
- **2.** **MIKKEL KESSLER**
  Denmark | 46-3-0 (35 KOs)
- **3.** **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
  Russia | 46-3-0 (26 KOs)
- **4.** **GEORGE GROVES**
  U.K. | 19-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **5.** **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
  Armenia | 38-4-0 (28 KOs)
- **6.** **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
  South Africa | 22-0-2 (13 KOs)
- **7.** **SAKIO BIKA**
  Cameroon | 32-5-3 (21 KOs)
- **8.** **JAMES DEGALE**
  U.K. | 17-1-0 (11 KOs)
- **9.** **ANDRE DIRRELL**
  U.S. | 21-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **10.** **MARCO ANTONIO PERIBAN**
  Mexico | 20-1-1 (13 KOs)

RATINGS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

- C **SERGIO MARTINEZ** Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs)
- 1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** Kazakhstan | 28-0-0 (25 KOs)
- 2. **FELIX STURM** Germany | 39-3-2 (18 KOs)
- 3. **DANIEL GEALE** Australia | 29-2-0 (15 KOs)
- 4. **PETER QUILLIN** U.S. | 30-0-0 (22 KOs)
- 5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN** U.K. | 30-5-0 (20 KOs)
- 6. **MARTIN MURRAY** U.K. | 26-1-1 (11 KOs)
- 7. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO** Mexico | 58-6-1 (50 KOs)
- 8. **MAX BURSAK** Ukraine | 29-1-1 (12 KOs)
- 9. **CURTIS STEVENS** U.S. | 25-4-0 (18 KOs)
- 10. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM** Cameroon | 28-1-0 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

- C **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs)
- 1. **SAUL ALVAREZ** Mexico | 42-1-1 (30 KOs)
- 2. **ERISLANDY LARA** Cuba | 19-1-2 (12 KOs)
- 3. **MIGUEL COTTO** Puerto Rico | 38-4-0 (31 KOs)
- 4. **CARLOS MOLINA** Mexico | 22-5-2 (6 KOs)
- 5. **AUSTIN TROUT** U.S. | 26-2-0 (14 KOs)
- 6. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE** U.S. | 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 7. **VANES MARTIROSYAN** U.S. | 33-1-1 (21 KOs)
- 8. **WILLIE NELSON** U.S. | 21-1-1 (12 KOs)
- 9. **ISHE SMITH** U.S. | 25-6-0 (11 KOs)
- 10. **JERMELL CHARLO** U.S. | 22-0-0 (11 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

- C **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs)
- 1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** U.S. | 31-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico | 55-7-1 (40 KOs)
- 3. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines | 55-5-2 (38 KOs)
- 4. **KELL BROOK** U.K. | 31-0-0 (21 KOs)
- 5. **ROBERT GUERRERO** U.S. | 31-2-1 (18 KOs)
- 6. **SHAWN PORTER** U.S. | 23-0-1 (14 KOs)
- 7. **KEITH THURMAN** U.S. | 22-0-0 (20 KOs)
- 8. **PAULIE MALIGNAGGI** U.S. | 33-5-0 (7 KOs)
- 9. **MARCOS MAIDANA** Argentina | 35-3-0 (31 KOs)
- 10. **ADRIEN BRONER** U.S. | 27-1-0 (22 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

- C **DANNY GARCIA** U.S. | 27-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 1. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE** Argentina | 34-3-0 (32 KOs)
- 2. **RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV** Russia | 23-2-0 (16 KOs)
- 3. **AMIR KHAN** U.K. | 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
- 4. **MIKE ALVARADO** U.S. | 34-2-0 (23 KOs)
- 5. **LAMONT PETERSON** U.S. | 31-2-1 (16 KOs)
- 6. **ZAB JUDAH** U.S. | 42-9-0 (29 KOs)
- 7. **KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV** Russia | 19-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 8. **DIERRY JEAN** Canada | 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
- 9. **VIKTOR POSTOL** Ukraine | 25-0-0 (10 KOs)
- 10. **SELCUK AYDIN** Turkey | 26-2-0 (19 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

- C **VACANT**
- 1. **ADRIEN BRONER** U.S. | 27-1-0 (22 KOs)
- 2. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico | 33-3-0 (13 KOs)
- 3. **RICHAR ABRIL** Cuba | 18-3-1 (8 KOs)
- 4. **RICKY BURNS** U.K. | 36-2-1 (11 KOs)
- 5. **RAYMUNDO BELTRAN** Mexico | 28-6-1 (17 KOs)
- 6. **SHARIF BOGERE** Uganda | 23-1-0 (15 KOs)
- 7. **KEVIN MITCHELL** U.K. | 36-2-0 (26 KOs)
- 8. **DANIEL ESTRADA** Mexico | 32-2-1 (24 KOs)
- 9. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** U.S. | 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 10. **OMAR FIGUEROA** U.S. | 22-0-1 (17 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

- C **VACANT**
- 1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA** Japan | 20-0-1 (17 KOs)
- 2. **MIKEY GARCIA** U.S. | 33-0-0 (28 KOs)
- 3. **RANCES BARTHELEMY** Cuba | 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 4. **TAKASHI MIURA** Japan | 27-2-2 (20 KOs)
- 5. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS** Mexico | 30-1-2 (20 KOs)
- 6. **ROMAN MARTINEZ** Puerto Rico | 27-2-2 (16 KOs)
- 7. **ARGENIS MENDEZ** Dominican Rep. | 21-3-1 (11 KOs)
- 8. **DIEGO MAGDALENO** U.S. | 24-1-0 (9 KOs)
- 9. **TAKAHIRO AO** Japan | 25-3-1 (12 KOs)
- 10. **WILL TOMLINSON** Australia | 21-0-1 (12 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

- C **VACANT**
- 1. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico | 55-8-0 (47 KOs)
- 2. **ORLANDO SALIDO** Mexico | 40-12-2 (28 KOs)
- 3. **ABNER MARES** Mexico | 26-1-1 (14 KOs)
- 4. **EVGENY GRADOVICH** Russia | 18-0-0 (9 KOs)
- 5. **SIMPIWE VETYEKA** South Africa | 26-2-0 (16 KOs)
- 6. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico | 45-5-0 (35 KOs)
- 7. **NICHOLAS WALTERS** Jamaica | 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
- 8. **BILLY DIB** Australia | 36-3-0 (21 KOs)
- 9. **JAVIER FORTUNA** Dominican Rep. | 23-0-1 (17 KOs)
- 10. **NONITO DONAIRE** Philippines | 32-2-0 (21 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

- C **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX** Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs)
- 1. **CARL FRAMPTON** U.K. | 17-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 2. **LEO SANTA CRUZ** U.S. | 26-0-1 (15 KOs)
- 3. **KIKO MARTINEZ** Spain | 30-4-0 (22 KOs)
- 4. **VIC DARCHINYAN** Armenia | 39-6-1 (28 KOs)
- 5. **VICTOR TERRAZAS** Mexico | 37-3-1 (21 KOs)
- 6. **SCOTT QUIGG** U.K. | 27-0-2 (20 KOs)
- 7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES** Mexico | 49-7-2 (24 KOs)
- 8. **JEFFREY MATHEBULA** South Africa | 27-5-2 (14 KOs)
- 9. **JHONATAN ROMERO** Colombia | 23-1-0 (12 KOs)
- 10. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico | 50-4-2 (38 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C VACANT

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama | 34-2-1 (12 KOs)
2. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   Japan | 20-0-2 (15 KOs)
3. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 32-1-0 (17 KOs)
4. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines | 33-3-3 (20 KOs)
5. **HUGO RUIZ**
   Mexico | 33-2-0 (29 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana | 29-5-0 (22 KOs)
7. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
   U.K. | 23-2-1 (10 KOs)
8. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan | 29-0-0 (18 KOs)
9. **JULIO CEJA**
   Mexico | 25-1-0 (23 KOs)
10. **PAULUS AMBUNDA**
    Namibia | 20-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C VACANT

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina | 41-1-2 (22 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
   Mexico | 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
   Thailand | 23-3-1 (21 KOs)
4. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
   Thailand | 25-3-0 (15 KOs)
5. **ZOLANI TETE**
   South Africa | 18-3-0 (16 KOs)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.**
   Mexico | 17-2-1 (9 KOs)
7. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
   Philippines | 24-0-0 (14 KOs)
8. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand | 51-1-1 (17 KOs)
9. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
   Mexico | 29-2-0 (24 KOs)
10. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
    Japan | 29-4-0 (18 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C AKIRA YAEGASHI
Japan | 19-3-0 (9 KOs)

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua | 37-0-0 (31 KOs)
2. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
   Mexico | 25-2-0 (18 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   U.S. | 32-4-0 (19 KOs)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico | 49-8-0 (29 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina | 32-1-0 (17 KOs)
6. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
   Japan | 18-2-1 (11 KOs)
7. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
   Mexico | 31-3-1 (27 KOs)
8. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 36-4-0 (26 KOs)
9. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines | 30-1-0 (12 KOs)
10. **ROCKY FUENTES**
    Philippines | 35-6-2 (20 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C VACANT

1. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines | 32-1-4 (18 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan | 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
   Mexico | 19-1-1 (10 KOs)
4. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico | 28-2-1 (17 KOs)
5. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
   Philippines | 19-2-0 (11 KOs)
6. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
   Mexico | 21-1-1 (14 KOs)
7. **FELIX ALVARADO**
   Nicaragua | 18-1-0 (15 KOs)
8. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
   Peru | 31-8-0 (13 KOs)
9. **NAOYA INOUE**
   Japan | 5-0-0 (4 KOs)
10. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
    South Africa | 24-2-0 (17 KOs)

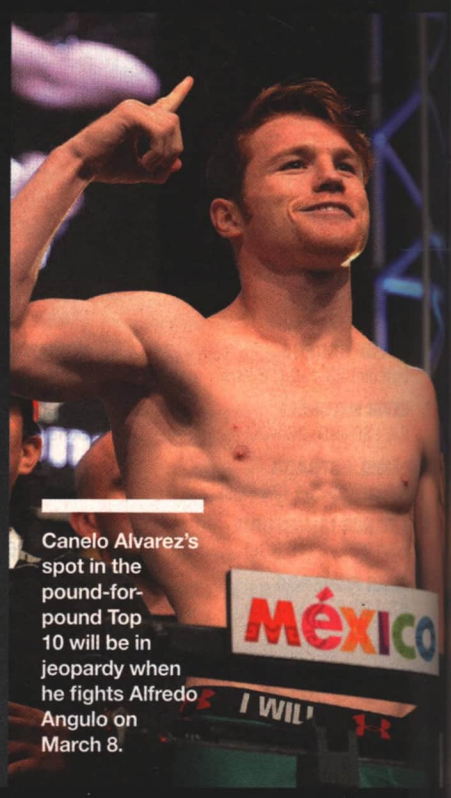
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C VACANT

1. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand | 32-0-0 (10 KOs)
2. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
   South Africa | 24-1-0 (7 KOs)
3. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
   China | 22-4-1 (12 KOs)
4. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines | 33-5-6 (21 KOs)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan | 26-6-0 (10 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
   Nicaragua | 27-0-1 (16 KOs)
7. **MERLITO SABILLO**
   Philippines | 23-0-1 (12 KOs)
8. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
   Mexico | 28-4-0 (20 KOs)
9. **RYUJI HARA**
   Japan | 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **CARLOS VELARDE**
    Mexico | 25-3-1 (14 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
   U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT/ JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
2. **ANDRE WARD**
   U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
3. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   U.S. | 31-0-0 (12 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
4. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   Ukraine | 61-3-0 (51 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
5. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
   Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico | 55-7-1 (40 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
7. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines | 55-5-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
8. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
9. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
   Mexico | 42-1-1 (30 KOs) | JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
10. **CARL FROCH**
    U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT



Canelo Alvarez's spot in the pound-for-pound Top 10 will be in jeopardy when he fights Alfredo Angulo on March 8.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

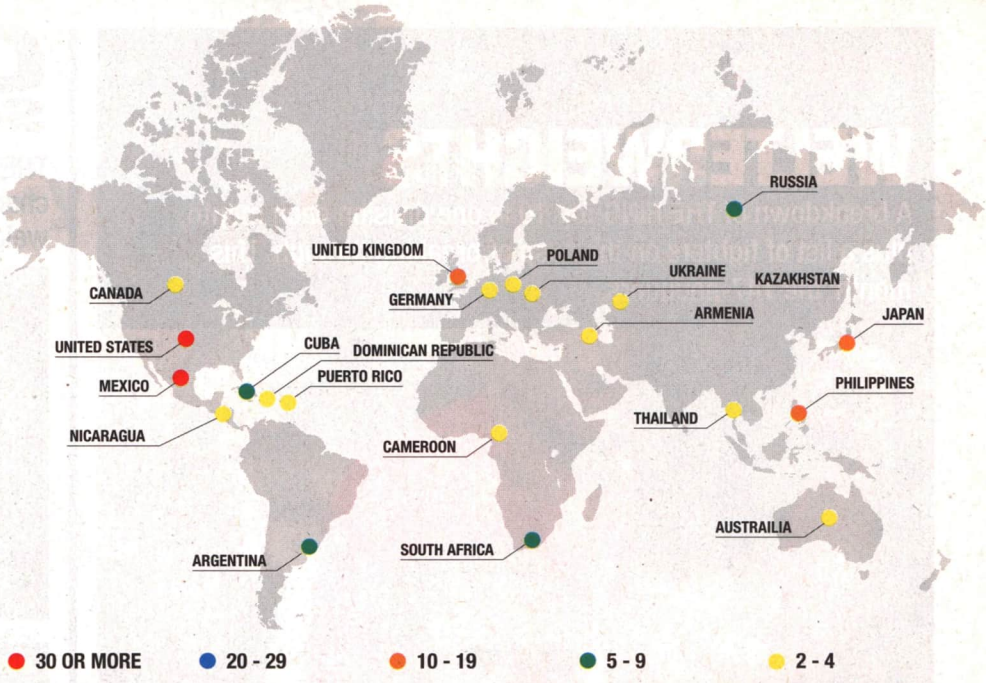
A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	34 *	
MEXICO	30	
UNITED KINGDOM	16	↓ 1
JAPAN	13	↓ 1
PHILIPPINES	10	↑ 1
RUSSIA	8	
SOUTH AFRICA	7	
CUBA	6	↑ 1
ARGENTINA	5	
CANADA	4	
GERMANY	4	
THAILAND	4	
UKRAINE	4	
AUSTRALIA	3	
NICARAGUA	3	
POLAND	3	
ARMENIA	2	
CAMEROON	2	↑ 1
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
KAZAKHSTAN	2	
PUERTO RICO	2	
BULGARIA	1	
CHINA	1	
COLOMBIA	1	
CONGO	1	
DENMARK	1	
FINLAND	1	
GHANA	1	
JAMAICA	1	
MALAWI	1	
NAMIBIA	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
SPAIN	1	
TURKEY	1	
UGANDA	1	
UZBEKISTAN	1	

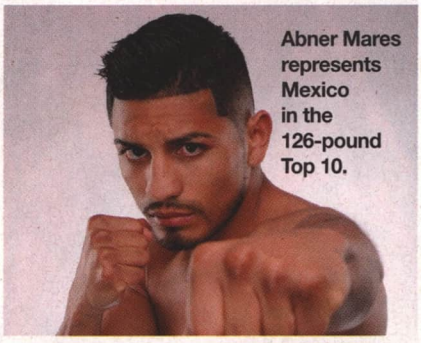
** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight) and Adrien Broner (welterweight and lightweight).*



AMERICAS VS. WORLD

Boxing is truly an international sport, as 37 countries are represented in THE RING Ratings. And fighters from Europe and Asia seem to be doing particularly well these days. Still, the Americas – North, South and Central – dominate the sport. How do they compare with the rest of the planet? Coincidentally, it's a draw. Here's how it breaks down.

DIVISION	AMERICAS	WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHTS	4	7
CRUISERWEIGHTS	1	10
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	5	6
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	8
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	4	7
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	11	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	9	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	6	5
LIGHTWEIGHTS	7	3
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	6	4
FEATHERWEIGHTS	6	4
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	6	5
BANTAMWEIGHTS	3	7
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT	4	6
FLYWEIGHTS	7	4
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	5	5
STRAWWEIGHTS	3	7
TOTAL	90	90



Abner Mares represents Mexico in the 126-pound Top 10.

VIVA MEXICO

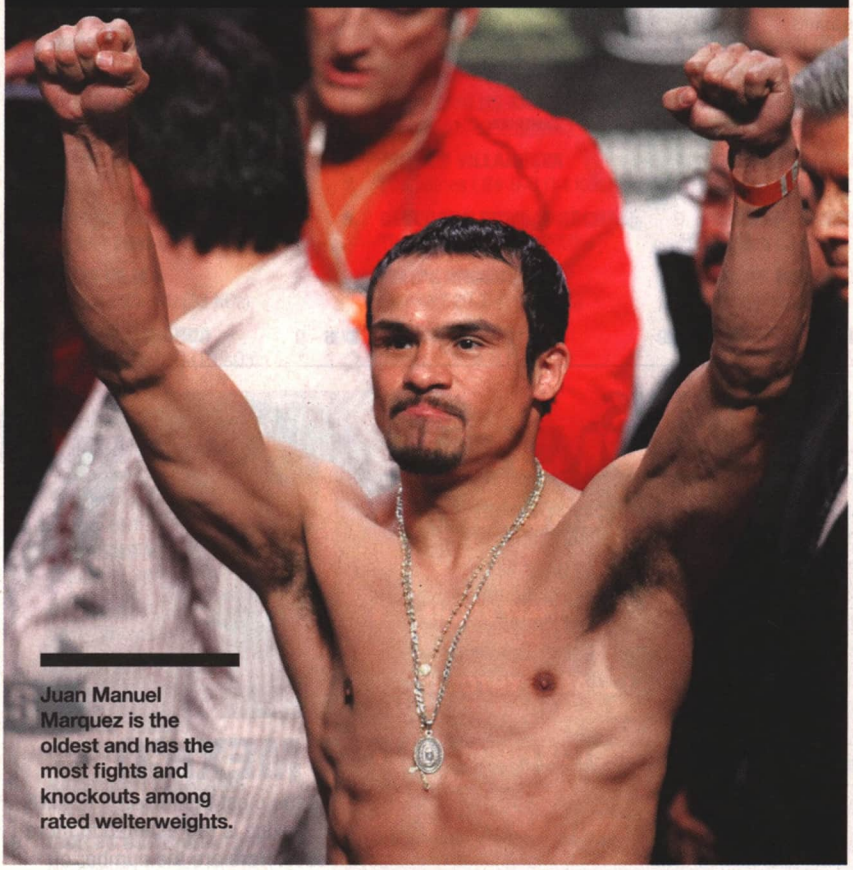
The U.S. has the most fighters in THE RING Ratings but Mexico is represented in more weight classes. Here are the number of divisions in which these nations have at least one rated fighter. Note: There are 17 weight classes.

13	MEXICO
11	U.S.
10	U.K.
7	PHILIPPINES
7	S. AFRICA
6	CUBA
6	JAPAN
6	RUSSIA
5	ARGENTINA
4	UKRAINE
3	AUSTRALIA
3	CANADA
3	GERMANY
3	NICARAGUA

FOCUS ON . . .

WELTERWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 147-pounders.



Juan Manuel Marquez is the oldest and has the most fights and knockouts among rated welterweights.

MOST WEEKS RATED: MANNY PACQUIAO **217**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: SHAWN PORTER **6**

OLDEST: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ **40**

YOUNGEST: ADRIEN BRONER **24**

MOST FIGHTS: MARQUEZ **63**

FEWEST FIGHTS: KEITH THURMAN **22**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: (TIE) FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR., TIM BRADLEY, KELL BROOK AND THURMAN **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: PAULIE MALIGNAGGI **86.8 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: MARQUEZ **40**

FEWEST KOS: MALIGNAGGI **7**

LONGEST WINNING STREAK: MAYWEATHER **45 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: MAYWEATHER **(NO. 1)**, BRADLEY **(NO. 3)**, MARQUEZ **(NO. 6)** AND PACQUIAO **(NO. 7)**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: MAYWEATHER **(RING, WBC)**, BRADLEY **(WBO)**, PORTER **(IBF)** AND MARCOS MAIDANA **(WBA)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): LUIS ABREGU, DEVON ALEXANDER, LEONARD BUNDU, JESUS SOTO KARASS AND JESSIE VARGAS

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

Gennady Golovkin

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

LEM SATTERFIELD STAFF WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
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WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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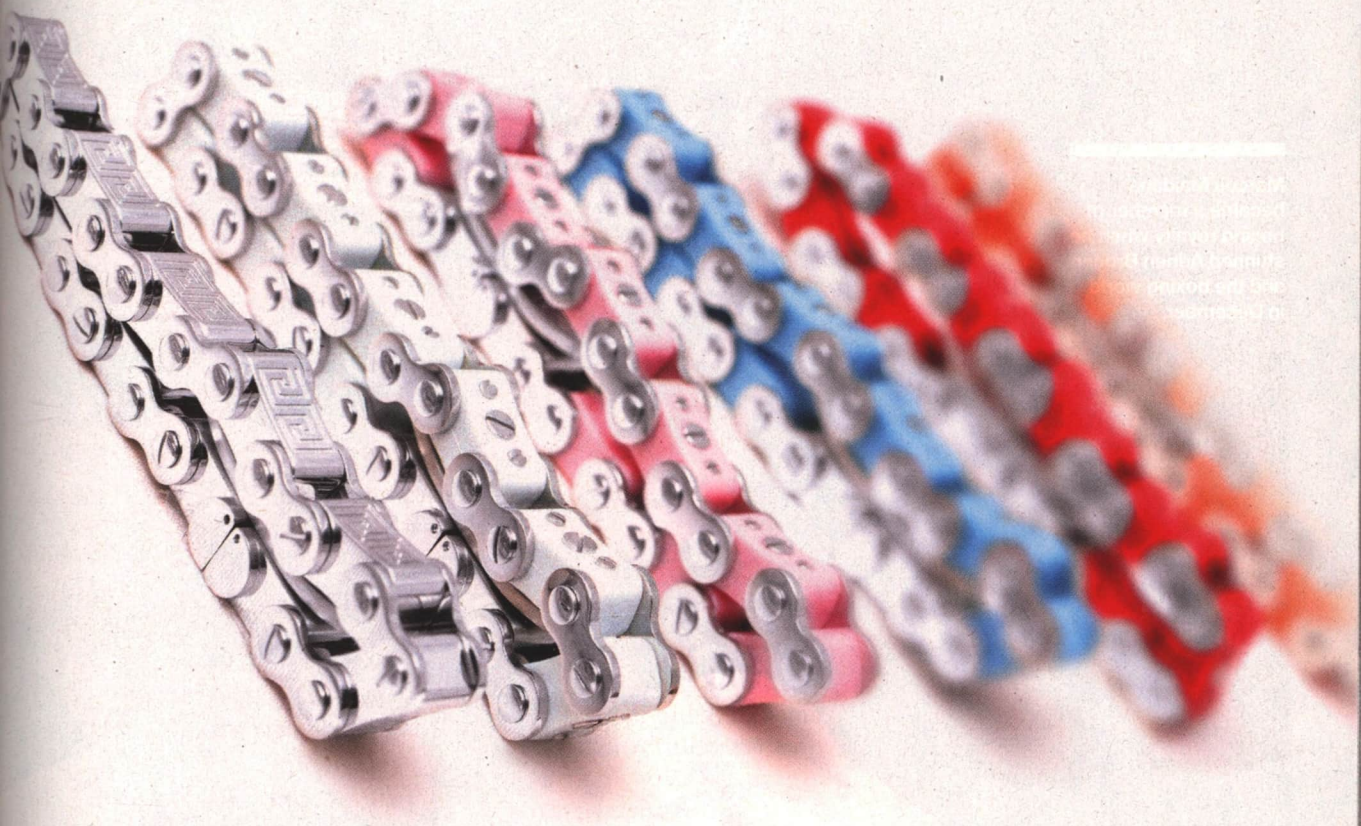

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ONE PERFECT

Marcos Maidana became a member of boxing royalty when he stunned Adrien Broner and the boxing world in December.

NIGHT

WE'LL NEVER LOOK AT **MARCOS MAIDANA** THE SAME AFTER HIS STUNNING DOMINATION OF ADRIEN BRONER

By **Bart Barry**

Just after the halfway mark in the 11th round of his December title fight with American Adrien Broner, Argentine welterweight Marcos Maidana spun Broner, stood directly behind him and thrust his protective cup thrice against Broner's backside. And 11,000 or so South Texans in San Antonio's Alamodome rose in unison to emit a whooping cackle at Broner's expense.

It was payback for the theatrical humping gesture Broner had perpetrated on the matte-gold banner across the seat of Maidana's trunks in the closing 15 seconds of Round 1, when Broner was still boxing's newest prodigy and Maidana was a limited South American slugger, and it had gone unforgotten in Maidana's calculating brain. Maidana's triumphantly deprecating gesture became a signature garnish of sorts for the greatest night of his career – a unanimous decision victory and THE RING'S 2013 Upset of the Year – an evening that was nigh impossible 20 months before, when "El Chino" openly contemplated retirement.

"When Devon Alexander beat me," Maidana said from his home in Santa Fe, Argentina, "it was a frustrating moment for me, and I was confused. I had doubts about my future."

"A tremendous failure," said Maidana's manager, Sebastian Contursi, in Buenos Aires. "After that fight, Maidana was very depressed because he didn't win even one single round. We gave him time to recover. I had a personal conversation with him, and I said, 'You have great potential. You have to rebuild yourself. I have a great trainer for you, and it's Robert Garcia.'"

"I picked him up at the airport, and his cousin was the one asking a lot of questions. Maidana just sat in the backseat and laid down and didn't say a word," said Garcia, Maidana's current trainer and a former junior lightweight world titlist. "The first thing I thought was, 'Wow, we're going to have troubles with this guy not wanting to be here.' But once we started working, it caught my attention that he followed every single instruction we gave him. He did every single thing he was told, and that was when I knew: This is the kind of guy we want

in our gym.

"Who would've ever thought that Maidana could do something like that to Broner, before?"

Never have so many euphoric boxing fans left the Alamodome as did that night. It was mostly schadenfreude directed at Adrien Broner, a figure who, for a large number of reasons, made it delightful to cheer his defeat. In the fight's opening moments, perhaps any Latino whaling away on Broner would have pleased the partisan-Mexican crowd, but the man who spun Broner in the 11th and returned the American's sexual innuendo received cheers for himself personally, and for his triumph over unreasonably long odds.

"That was funny, but I felt I had to get it back to him after he had humped me early in the fight," said Maidana. "During all the process leading up to the fight, Broner always had a disrespectful and arrogant attitude, and I said it was going to be different in the ring."

"The media can make my left shoe into a superstar," said Paulie Malignaggi, the two-division world titlist who provided commentary for Showtime's broadcast that night. "Broner showed some character, hanging in there for 12 rounds. But at that point, your mouth has written so many checks that your ass has no choice but to stand in there and cash them."

Master golf instructor Harvey Penick once imparted the following advice to a member of his University of Texas team: "Don't be afraid of the player with a good grip and a bad swing. Don't be afraid of a player with a bad grip and a good swing. The player to be aware of is the one with the bad grip and the bad swing. If he's reached your level, he has grooved his faults and knows how to score." That was a lesson Adrien Broner did not bring in the ring with him in Texas, the very same way Victor Ortiz neglected to bring it to his own coronation in 2009. Amir Khan neglected it, too, in 2010.

"The problem with an awkward fighter who can punch is, if he reacts differently than what you're anticipating, you cannot take too many chances because if you get caught you may go to sleep," said Malignaggi. "I saw Adrien Broner trying to do that little touch jab he always does, stick that little jab out, then hit you

Maidana has the attitude of an Old West gunslinger: punch first, ask questions later.

with the right hand.

"There's two problems there. One, Maidana doesn't respect your power. And two, you don't have a follow-up for the right hand."

Maidana's footwork is not particularly adept. He crosses his feet over when he pursues an opponent, swimming violently ahead in a somewhat amateurish display of enthusiasm. Such uneconomical motion is as likely a culprit as any for the late-round lack of endurance that has occasionally plagued him. When one considers the malice he affixes to the knuckles of every punch, though, that Maidana does not fade early and always is a wonder of its own.

Maidana has a chin that takes on dents but is not breakable, more tin than porcelain, a handicap the Argentine overcomes with the same quality he employs against his every other shortcoming: aggression.

"He swings to hurt," said Garcia. "Maidana goes in the ring to knock everybody out. That's the way he fights. Every punch he throws is hard."

"He has almost a Felix Trinidad mentality in that you drop him or you hurt him, and he roars back," said Malignaggi. "We saw that against Victor Ortiz and Amir Khan."

After his entirely unexpected triumph over Ortiz, in a 2009 fight that came 4½ months after his first loss, Maidana dropped his fourth defense of the 140-pound title he took from Ortiz in a unanimous decision to Khan, another anointed golden child (or silver as the case happened to be) whom Maidana bullied and chased maniacally for most of their match's final stanza, as Khan, wide-eyed and frightened, skipped desperate laps round the ring.

Five months later, Erik Morales stripped a good bit of fearsomeness from the Maidana brand by lasting all 36 minutes with the Argentine in a match critics had insisted was too dangerous for the unretired Mexican master. Eight months after the lusterless victory, a match that brought more acclaim to Morales than Maidana, "El Chino" scored a stay-busy stoppage over Russian Petr Petrov and prepared for a welterweight debut that would mark his undoing.

Evidently unwell in Missouri on Feb. 25, 2012, Maidana got fully outclassed by St. Louis contender Devon Alexander, losing 29 of 30 possible points on the official scorecards of their 10-round fight. He became despondent.

"Anybody who knows Maidana recognizes that he was not there," said Contursi. "He was very ill that night."

"He wanted to retire," said Garcia. "But all the guys in my gym are very friendly. They started going to his hotel and then finding their way of talking to him. He became friends with everybody. He fell in love with the sport again."

Seven months after his career's worst defeat, Maidana made his first match as part of Robert Garcia's Oxnard, Calif., stable and beat down veteran Mexican truth-detector Jesus Soto Karass, dropping him in Round 7 and stopping him in Round 8. After blasting out Angel Martinez in Buenos Aires three months later, Maidana went to Carson, Calif., to face local Josesito Lopez. In a savage affair, Maidana was buckled several times before his relentless aggression – at times effective, often ineffective, always relentless – broke Lopez and ended their fight in Round 6.

MARCOS MAIDANA

THE ESSENTIALS

Age: 30

Hometown: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Nickname: El Chino

Turned pro: 2004

Division: Welterweight (147 pounds)

Height: 5 feet 7 inches (170 cm)

Stance: Orthodox

Record: 35-3 (31 KOs)

Record in title fights: 1-2 (0 KOs)*

Biggest victories: Victor Ortiz, TKO 6, 2009 (first fight in U.S.); Victor Cayo, KO 6, 2010; Erik Morales, MD, 2011; Josesito Lopez, TKO 6, 2013; Adrien Broner, UD, 2013 (won WBA 147-pound title).

Losses: Andreas Kotelnik, SD, 2009 (for WBA 140-pound title); Amir Khan, UD, 2010 (for WBA 140-pound title); Devon Alexander, UD, 2012.

*—Maidana won the WBA's "regular" junior welterweight title, which THE RING doesn't recognize.

Maidana (right) wasn't able to beat Amir Khan but provided drama even in defeat.

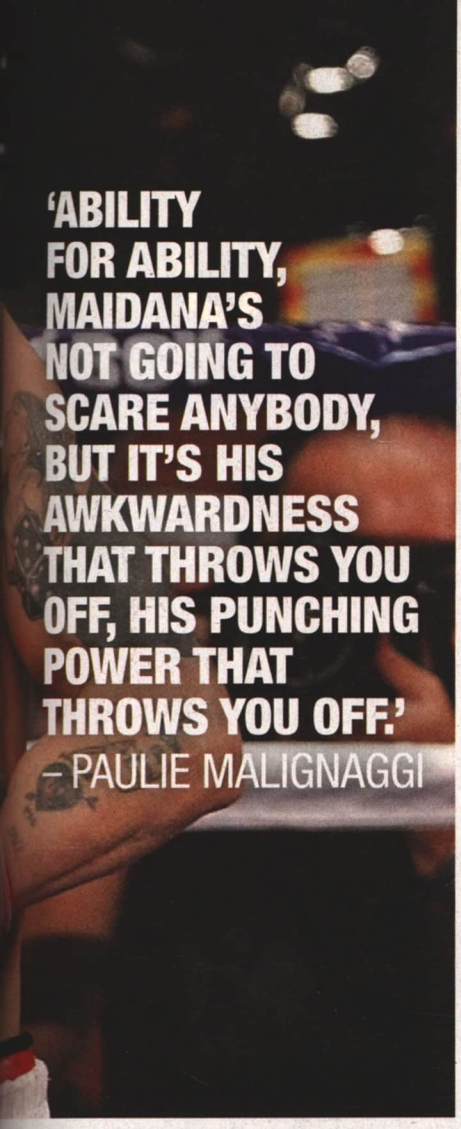
"I've improved my defense, the way I use my guard and the way I parry some punches," said Maidana about his altered style. "Also Robert calmed me down, because I usually punched myself out early in fights."

Some combination of Maidana's power being absent against Alexander and his lingering defensive carelessness being exploited by Lopez likely won Maidana the "honor" to place a crown atop Broner's swelling head.

"I did get a call from a friend of mine the night before the fight, and he said he put in a big bet on Broner in Vegas," said Paulie Malignaggi, who lost a split decision to Broner in June. "And I said to him, 'Why would you do that, dude?' And he said, 'Maidana's not going to be able to hit him, and it's money in the bank.' And I told him, 'Bro, I fought the guy, and I'm telling you I don't like the bet.'"

Promotional spots, press conferences and pre-fight workouts for December's match, all fixated on Broner as boxing's future great, the self-proclaimed heir to the "Money" Mayweather crown. An imitation is never as pure as its original, though, and whereas Mayweather had a fighting family to raise him, an amateur career that culminated in an Olympic bronze medal and exceptional early matchmaking to nurture him, building his toolbox and not merely his knockout ratio, Broner relied on businessmen and a hairbrush. He was an exceptional athlete but an unproven fighter – which is a way of imparting that Broner understood his own body but not others'.

Maidana understood both, and for all his relative want of reflex and defensive prowess, it was immediately apparent Maidana was the better fighter at the Alamodome. He rushed across the ring at Broner in their fight's opening instant and initiated things with a surprising belligerence – a wish to set their



next 36 minutes in the personal space between two men where contempt and resentment cause rage. Maidana's ferocious form of combat served him perfectly well, focusing his mind on the thriftiest way to bring the most extraordinary pain possible.

He jabbed to Broner's body repeatedly in the beginning. It appeared merely a means of letting Broner know he was there. But it was much more.

"I thought Maidana was using that jab to the body as a rhythm-breaker," said Malignaggi. "Then when he threw that hook to the head, I saw that it started to come out like the jab, then he changed the trajectory into a hook. When I saw it, I said, 'Wow, that's what he was doing. Great setup!'"

"Make Broner think that we're going to try to win the rounds like Paulie did, by going to the body with a lot of punches," said Garcia of the strategy he hatched. "He doesn't expect the feint to the body and then coming up with the left hook on the head. He never expected that. Second round, Marcos did that and dropped him."

Maidana's left-hook lead in Round 2 began with a jab feint, one that dropped both of Broner's red gloves below the shiny gold "About Billions" script on his waistband, while turning Broner from front foot to back, snapping his chin to the exact spot Maidana's racing left fist went. Broner dropped in the ropes, and his face betrayed a first dash of what horror now pushed through fissures in his nonchalant façade. Broner rose on legs rigid as wooden pegs, genuinely imperiled.

"Maidana became the absolute boss," wrote Osvaldo Principi, an award-winning writer with *La Nación* in Buenos Aires, "pulverizing Broner who, bleeding and without a base – his footwork – was obligated to suffer permanently in the match. He finished small and fragile."

Maidana had not merely outhit Broner but outsmarted him, making him bite foolishly on a trap baited with the American's own arrogance and presumptiveness. Maidana dropped him again in Round 8 and then fouled him with a head butt that sent Broner flopping to the canvas in search of an escape hatch from what four rounds remained in his contractual obligation.

"It was nothing," Maidana told Principi in his dressing room afterward. "Broner made a dirty fight, so then I had to make it even dirtier. It was like that. And after I hit him, he exaggerated."

After spinning him and humping him with a vengeful sort of relish in Round 11, Maidana fought a finally desperate Broner off him in the 12th and celebrated when all three scorecards landed on the proper side of the ledger, scoring the match in Maidana's favor: 117-109, 115-109 and 115-110.

"It is the greatest night of my career," Maidana said at ringside.

The only meritocracy boxing reliably runs is the one that happens between its ropes and bells, and that is why, contrary to Maidana's assumption after his beating of Broner, the Argentine does not top the lottery list of Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s prospective opponents for 2014.

"Everybody was calling Broner the next Floyd," said Garcia. "Even Floyd himself was saying that Broner was the next Floyd. Mayweather should say this is the fight that he needs."

"He is the best in the world, really," Maidana said of Mayweather, "but that does not make him invincible."

"Ability for ability, Maidana's not going to scare anybody, but it's his awkwardness that throws you off, his punching power that throws you off," said Malignaggi. "Can he make that work against Floyd? I have my doubts. But would I want to see it? Yeah."

Regardless of how such a fight would go, regardless of where his career goes from here, Marcos "El Chino" Maidana will always have his one perfect and unlikely December night in San Antonio. RING

AN ANTI-HERO'S

Adrien Broner (right) didn't receive much sympathy after his one-sided loss to Marcos Maidana.

COMEUPPANCE

MANY FANS EXPRESSED JOY WHEN BRATTY ADRIEN BRONER WAS PUMMELED BY MARCOS MAIDANA

By **Tim Smith**

When Marcos Maidana handed Adrien Broner his first beating and the first loss of his pro career, it sent a wave of euphoric joy through much of the boxing world. The exuberance was not the same as when Joe Louis defeated German Max Schmeling and sent U.S. boxing fans streaming into the streets to celebrate.

No, this was classic enjoyment at the misfortune of others. Not since Dorothy's house dropped on the Wicked Witch in Oz has there been such a universal outpouring of glee.

The Twitter world exploded. There were mocked-up photos of a beaten and battered Broner with derisive captions. It seemed a proper send-up for a boxer who has used social media to build

Broner's cockiness fueled his critics after he lost to Maidana.

himself into boxing's bad boy.

"Everybody likes to see the anti-hero get beat," said a friend who is a huge boxing fan.

Sure, that's true. But there was more to it than that.

At the height of his career, Muhammad Ali was an anti-hero because of his refusal to fight in Vietnam and because of his conversion to Islam. Even though he had his detractors, they didn't hold a parade down Eighth Avenue the night he lost to Joe Frazier at Madison Square Garden in 1971.

Mike Tyson was "The Baddest Man on the Planet" in more ways than one. When Buster Douglas ripped away his veil of invincibility and KO'd Tyson in Tokyo in 1991, there wasn't a mass rally by his critics.

And the masses probably will not create a national holiday if Floyd Mayweather Jr. ever loses. But it's very difficult to deny his genius in the boxing ring.

Broner isn't nearly as accomplished as Mayweather or as well known as Ali and Tyson. But among boxing fans, Broner is as disliked as all of them combined.

A bratty braggart with little on his resume to support his oversized swagger, Broner

BY SENDING VULGAR TWEETS AND CHRONICLING HIS BAD BOY LIFESTYLE HE HAS REPULSED A MAJORITY OF BOXING FANS.

Neither Paulie Malignaggi nor Broner handled themselves with grace going into their fight.

embraced the label as the heir apparent to Mayweather. It was the kind of arrogance that turned off many boxing fans. While Mayweather is boastful and arrogant, he has backed it up with a sterling resume and an unblemished professional record. And while he turns a lot of people off with his gross materialism, Mayweather is clever enough to play the "Money" character with a wink and a nod.

Broner doesn't have the charm or charisma of Mayweather, and it doesn't seem to matter to him. He isn't trying to win a popularity contest, and he couldn't anyway. He's not that good an actor. What you see is what you get. And most people don't like what they see. That is why they loved what Maidana did to him in the ring.

Broner has used social media as his personal playground, obviously thinking that by doing so he could build a fan base that would follow him and help build him into a boxing celebrity. But it has been a two-edged sword. He has increased his popularity, but by sending vulgar tweets and chronicling his bad-boy lifestyle he has repulsed a majority of boxing fans.

While a certain amount of trash talking is tolerated in boxing, Broner takes it over the top. The press conference for his match against Paulie Malignaggi was stomach-turning as he trotted out one of Malignaggi's former girlfriends as a prop in his play to unnerve his opponent. The back and forth was profane and vulgar, and it had nothing to do with the actual boxing match.

Malignaggi was ringside as Showtime's expert analyst for the broadcast of Maidana-Broner. He said he never allowed what happened between them during the promotion of their fight to cloud his commentary. He didn't cheer when he lost. He empathized with Broner.

When he started out in boxing, Malignaggi was something of an arrogant brat himself. So he understands what Broner is trying to accomplish by being over the top. He wanted people to notice him, because he thought it would land him bigger fights and more money.

"I remember turning pro, and I was playing the bad guy role, and there was such a small circle that there was no one around to see it," Malignaggi said. "He's got the big platform to perform the shtick. But people realize that it's not shtick. It's him, who he really is. I don't think he was like this before ... the fame and the money overtook him in a lot of ways. He morphed into this out-of-this-world person."

Malignaggi said the money, the fame and attention have led Broner to believe that he can't ever turn it off.

"Even when he turned it off, you could see it wasn't genuine," Malignaggi said. "You saw in the interview with Showtime when he was saying how getting arrested had changed him. But you can see it's not really true. He hasn't changed. He's the same guy. You start to root against the guy."

Malignaggi said he tried to give Broner some advice following their match.

"Try a little less to be disliked. You no longer have to be the villain to make people remember you. People are looking for a reason to like you. Turn it down a little bit," Malignaggi said he told Broner. "He looked at me, and it went in one ear and out the other."

As Mayweather can attest, victories are the only way to keep the hater's backlash at bay. A first loss can be a humbling experience for a boxer. If Broner sheds some of the arrogance following his loss to Maidana, it could humanize him and make him more appealing to the fans.

Said Malignaggi: "Only time will tell." RING

AT A LOSS

HOW WILL **ADRIEN BRONER, CANELO ALVAREZ** AND **ABNER MARES** RESPOND TO THEIR FIRST DEFEATS? THAT DEPENDS ON WHAT THEY'RE MADE OF

By **Norm Frauenheim**

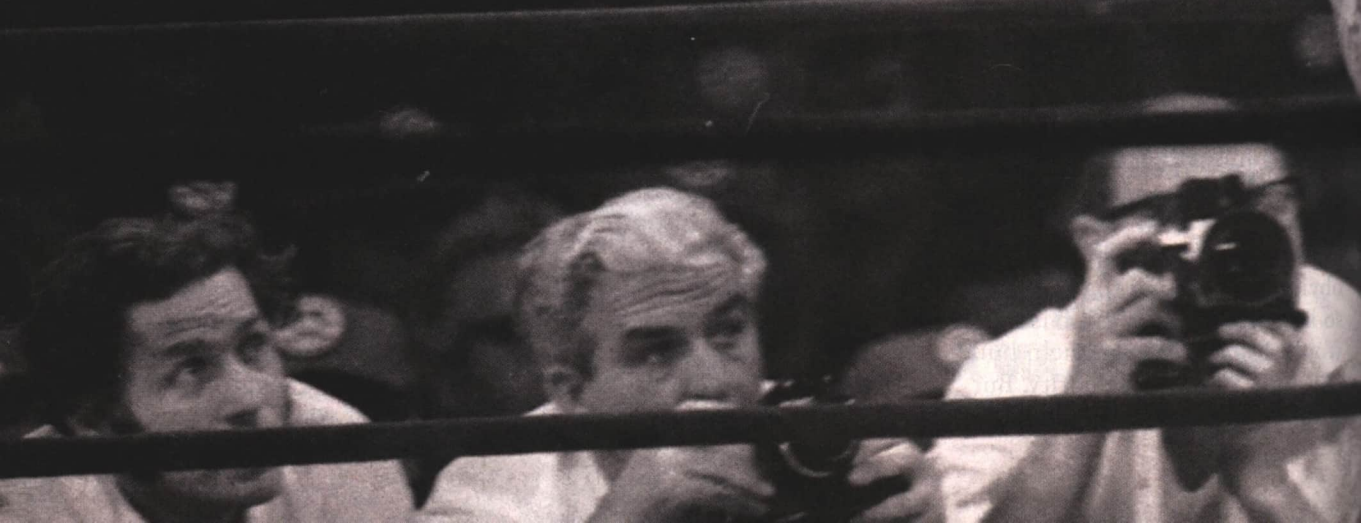
"I never thought of losing, but now that it's happened, the only thing is to do it right."
— Muhammad Ali, after his first loss.

But how? How does anyone do it right?

Ali did it – did it right – in the years after suffering a 1971 defeat he never contemplated, anticipated or imagined against Joe Frazier. That landmark loss is fundamental to the Ali story. Without it, Ali might not be the global icon he is today. With it, there was adversity. He was no longer unbeaten. No longer untested, either. There were two rematches with Frazier. There was Manila, George Foreman and Zaire in a drama that began with a loss and ended in a legend.

Ali is a defining example of how that first defeat can be transformed into opportunity. On any career path, it's a crossroads that fighters are told to expect. Adrien Broner, Canelo Alvarez and Abner Mares are there now. The unforeseen has happened, leaving each with a comeback to plot and potential self-doubt staring back at them when they look in the mirror.

That first loss is a tumble into the dangerous unknown



Muhammad Ali's first loss – to Joe Frazier (left) – was only a temporary setback.

for every fighter forced to make the trip. How will they react? After the zero on the right side of the won-lost column has vanished like a doughnut hole, it's hard to know what or who will replace it. The 0 can be a fighter's identity. It's a mark of confidence or a symbol of invincibility. Some believe it's as important to Floyd Mayweather Jr. as a dollar sign. Maybe, maybe not. Maybe it'll always be there for Mayweather, just as it was for Rocky Marciano.

Defeat isn't inevitable. Only scars are. Marciano never lost. Neither did Joe Calzaghe, Edwin Valero, Sven Ottke and Pichit Sitbangprachan. It's no coincidence, perhaps, that their names aren't included among the Top 10 on many all-time pound-for-pound lists, either. A record without a loss almost seems incomplete. Defeat provides another dimension that measures a career's depth and a fighter's substance. It provides some context.

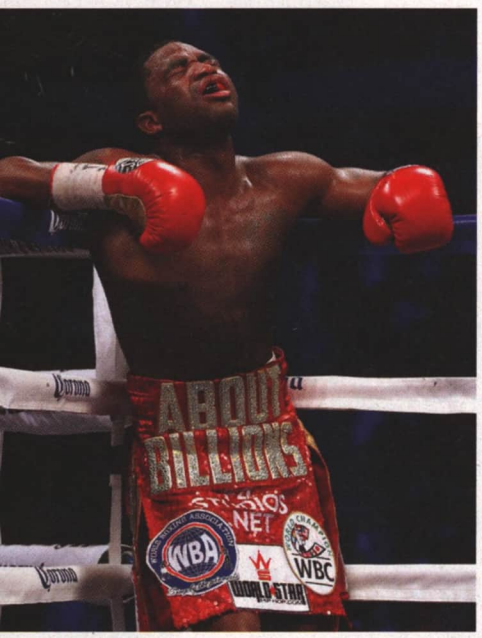
Yet, it's a resource relevant only in hindsight, an academic exercise valued mostly by writers and historians. In the here-and-now of an approaching threat at opening bell, only a fool would seek defeat. Losing is about as much fun as a head butt and dangerous to ego, aspirations and income. The uncertainty is perilous, loaded with equal amounts of risk and reward.

For Broner, Alvarez and Mares, there's not much choice since each lost in 2013 – Broner to Marcos Maidana in December, Alvarez to Mayweather in May and Mares to Jhonny Gonzalez in August. Confront the peril or get into a different line of work. Simple as that.

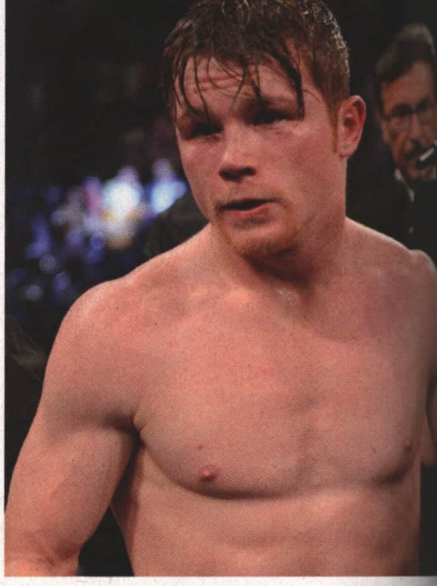
Above all, it's Broner's loss by a unanimous decision that has generated most of the attention. It was big enough to be THE RING's Upset of the Year. It was further magnified by Broner's flamboyance.

His X-rated, over-the-top behavior often made him look more like boxing's next Miley Cyrus than the heir-apparent to Mayweather. It outraged and entertained, yet always served its purpose. To wit: The public knows Broner. But notoriety also turned him into a very big target for fans who were delighted to see him taste defeat for the first time in a one-sided decision to Maidana at San Antonio's Alamodome.

His rematch with Maidana, planned for April, could provide sports psychologists with a new chapter in their ever-evolving diagnosis of defeat. Will his ego deflate faster than a punctured balloon at the Macy's Day Parade? Or will a healthy ego protect him from suffering a crisis that erodes confidence and stalls a promising career?



Adrien Broner apparently will have a chance to avenge his stunning loss to Marcos Maidana.



Canelo Alvarez joined a long list of fighters who were frustrated by Floyd Mayweather Jr.

For now, Broner vows to turn the loss into a lesson that will propel him toward his advertised potential.

"This is just a minor setback for a major comeback," Broner said through his Twitter account.

Broner also has been quoted as saying the loss will turn him into a monster.

What Broner doesn't want is another loss to Maidana. That would resurrect talk of him being the next Zab Judah. Judah is at the wrong end of what *can* happen in the aftermath of losing for the first time. He was as big a prospect as any when he turned pro in 1996. He went 27-0 before he fought Kostya Tszyu. In the opening round, Judah rocked, then mocked Tszyu. In the second round, he dropped his hands. Tszyu capitalized, dropping Judah with a crushing right hand. Referee Jay Nady ended it at 2:59 of the round. Judah, who angrily protested the stoppage by grabbing his stool and waving it at Nady, was never the same, going 15-8 over his next 23 bouts.

Judah was left with confidence

as fragile as a glass chin in the wake of a first loss. Ali represents what can happen. More often than not, however, Judah is the reality, the history that repeats itself. Fernando Vargas is another example. He was 20-0 when he met Felix Trinidad in 2000. Vargas, a 1996 Olympian, was still an emerging prospect. Trinidad was near his prime.

For Vargas, however, the bout was about money. He collected $4 million, but paid a price in terms of what it did to the rest of his career. He was knocked down twice in the first round. Trinidad scored a 12th-round knockout. Like Judah, Vargas was never the same with a 6-4 record over the next seven years.

"That first loss is really, really tough for some," said Hall of Fame promoter Don Chargin, who has seen it all in his long and storied career. "For Broner, I'm really anxious to see what happens. A guy who usually talks as much as he does, acts the way he does, this could be a real letdown. They really talk themselves into thinking that they can't lose, that they're super-human or something.

"They'll still have the bragging and everything. But when they're alone at night and wondering: 'What happened. I didn't think this guy could fight that much. But he really hurt me, had me down a couple of times. Maybe my chin is not as good as I thought it was.'

"I mean, all of those doubts can be erased in a good performance. But in that first one, you've seen, down through the years, what can happen. Matchmaking is important. You can get the guy an easy fight for a confidence-builder. You get a tomato can, a guy who couldn't win no matter what happens. But a lot of times not even that helps, because, in their mind, they know. They know they're fighting somebody who can't beat them. That leaves a whole set of other questions. Guys just begin to out-think themselves."

In some ways, a first-time loss can be as devastating as a defeat midway through a career. It can haunt a fighter for as long he stays in the game.

Bobo Olson, the world's middleweight champ in the mid-1950s and THE RING's 1953 Fighter of the Year, never recovered from a knockout loss to Archie Moore, who stopped him two minutes into the third round of a bout for the light heavyweight title on June 22, 1955, at the Polo Grounds in New York.

"When Bobo was the middleweight champ, he was really known for having a great chin," Chargin said. "I mean, nobody could hurt him. Then, he [easily defeated] Joey Maxim. It was really a setup for the Archie

Abner Mares (left) will have to overcome the shock of being stopped by Jhonny Gonzalez.

IMPACT OF FIRST LOSS

Some notable fighters have responded well to their first losses, bouncing back quickly and often performing as well or better than ever. For others, their first setback can be the beginning of their decline. Here are three who succeeded after their first taste of defeat and three who didn't.

SUCCEEDED

JOE LOUIS

First loss: Max Schmeling, 1936 (KO 12) ★ **Record before first loss:** 24-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 42-2 ★ **Background:** Louis seemed to be on his way to becoming heavyweight champ when the experienced German, who said he saw a flaw in Louis' technique, stopped the 22-year-old American in the 12th round. Louis used the setback as motivation and went on to become arguably the greatest heavyweight ever.

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON

First loss: Jake LaMotta, 1943 (UD 10) ★ **Record before first loss:** 40-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 133-18-6 ★ **Background:** Robinson was outweighed by 16 pounds when he lost to LaMotta and beat the "Bronx Bull" in five other meetings. Plus, he went 88-0-2 in the 90 fights following his first setback to build a reputation as the best fighter who ever lived. So Robinson's first loss, perhaps more than any other, didn't mean much.

MUHAMMAD ALI

First loss: Joe Frazier, 1971 (UD 15) ★ **Record before first loss:** 31-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 25-4 ★ **Background:** Ali had fought only twice after his three-year layoff when he met Frazier for the first time. Like Louis, the setback seemed to make him stronger. He went on to record many of his greatest victories, including a knockout of George Foreman that gave him the heavyweight title 10 years after he first won it.

STRUGGLED

JOE FRAZIER

First loss: George Foreman, 1973 (TKO 2) ★ **Record before first loss:** 29-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 3-3-1 ★ **Background:** Frazier was only 29 when the bigger, stronger Foreman stopped him in two rounds. "Smokin' Joe" wasn't finished. He recorded victories over Joe Bugner, Jerry Quarry and Jimmy Ellis and gave a breathtaking effort against Ali in the Thrilla in Manila, but he was never the dominating fighter he had been.

NASEEM HAMED

First loss: Marco Antonio Barrera, 2001 (UD 12) ★ **Record before first loss:** 35-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 1-0 ★ **Background:** Hamed, a brash, talented Briton who peaked in the late 1990s, was flying high going into his fight against Barrera. He had dominated a series of capable opponents and showed no signs of slowing down. Then Barrera embarrassed him, winning a one-sided decision. Hamed fought once more and then retired at only 28.

ZAB JUDAH

First loss: Kostya Tszyu, 2001 (TKO 2) ★ **Record before first loss:** 27-0 ★ **Record after first loss:** 15-8 ★ **Background:** Judah had the look of a star when he faced Tszyu. The New Yorker was holding his own when he was caught by a big right to the chin and went down. He got up but, on wobbly legs, fell down again and the fight was stopped. Judah won some major titles afterward but was never as respected as he was pre-Tszyu.

Boxer-turned-trainer Robert Garcia (right) went only 2-2 and then retired after he suffered his first loss, to Diego Corales in 1999.

Moore fight. But Archie really crucified him. Knocked him dead. After that, he continued to fight. I got him a few fights, four or five, after that. But he didn't have confidence in that chin any more.

"Prior to the Archie Moore fight, Bobo would always kid me, saying that nobody in the world could hurt him. But he was never the same after Archie Moore. Never. He would even tell me that every time he got hit, he thought about the Archie Moore fight. I mean, that kind of a thing can really work on a guy's mind."

For Broner, the best antidote might be a short memory. Instead of a confidence builder in a tune-up at lightweight or junior welter, however, Broner has chosen an immediate rematch with Maidana at 147 pounds. Even Mayweather, his hero and mentor, advised him to take an easier bout. But it sounds as if Broner just wants to quickly prove that the Maidana loss was an aberration.

"Yeah, I might have taken my first L, but watch how I come back fightin," Broner said in a tweet. "I love everybody [who hates] me. And the ones who stayed down with me while they try to bring me down, I will be welterweight champ again."

Broner's stubborn tone suggests that the loss hasn't changed him. But only after training camp opens and the first punch lands will he know whether the defeat altered the way he sees himself and his career. Ask Maidana trainer Robert Garcia about that. Garcia retired within two years after he lost for the first time in 1999 to the late legend Diego Corrales.

Garcia was 32-0 when Corrales stopped him in the seventh round of a Fight of the Year contender for the IBF version of the junior lightweight title. Garcia fought four more bouts, including losses to Ben Tackie and Joel Casamayor, before retiring in September 2001.

"My last fight was when I was 26," said Garcia, whose admiration for Corrales is exemplified by a picture he has of him on the wall in his gym, the Robert Garcia Boxing Academy, in Oxnard, Calif. "A lot of people told me and still ask: 'Why did you quit? Why didn't you make a comeback?'

"I could have done it. But when you don't have the desire to get up in the morning and jog, you shouldn't be doing it anymore. You don't want your trainer waking you up, telling you you have to train. That means your body shouldn't be doing it anymore. That's when I said it was over."

Garcia, who said he first started training as a 5-year-old, isn't certain whether he just grew weary of the regimen that had ruled his life for two decades. But a loss was a signal that it was time to at least think about a change.

For Broner, that thinking might be a simple adjustment in tactics, or diet, or training, or lifestyle. Doing it right means doing it to win, the only thing to do after a loss.

'YOU DON'T WANT YOUR TRAINER WAKING YOU UP, TELLING YOU YOU HAVE TO TRAIN. THAT MEANS YOUR BODY SHOULDN'T BE DOING IT ANYMORE. THAT'S WHEN I SAID IT WAS OVER.'
— ROBERT GARCIA

UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY

THE DEPARTURE OF VITALI KLITSCHKO HAS OPENED THE DOOR FOR **CHRIS ARREOLA** TO FIGHT BERMANE STIVERNE FOR A MAJOR TITLE IN SPITE OF ARREOLA'S SETBACKS

By Keith Idec

Chris Arreola is now focused on Bermane Stiverne, whom he is expected to face for the vacant WBC heavyweight title.

All the costly shortcuts Chris Arreola took during training in recent years somehow led "The Nightmare" on the right road toward fulfilling his dream.

In another ironic twist, the huge heavyweight who annihilated Arreola in his first shot at a world title inadvertently afforded Arreola his second championship chance. After the WBC named Vitali Klitschko its heavyweight champion emeritus Dec. 16, the Mexico City-based sanctioning organization ordered Bermane Stiverne, its No. 1 contender, to face Arreola, its No. 2 contender, in a rematch for its vacant heavyweight title.

A date and site for the rematch had not been determined at press time, but Arreola had already begun training for the fight, an encouraging sign that the affable Mexican-American actually will remain committed to preparing properly. Arreola said his approach to training finally changed in the aftermath of his defeat in their first fight, when reality hit him harder than the Stiverne right hand that broke his nose.

Losing a unanimous decision to Stiverne last April 27 forced

Arreola to realize that, at 32, he was wasting his vast potential and running out of opportunities to become a heavyweight champion. After all those public proclamations to his fans and private promises to his trainer and promoter, the colorful contender from Riverside, Calif., halted a perplexing pattern of irresponsible behavior before fights that harmed his career.

The 6-foot-4 Arreola seems to understand now that he cannot continue coming into high-profile fights out of shape, not if he wants to be remembered as more than just an expletive-spewing tough guy Klitschko clobbered one night at Staples Center. That's why Arreola (36-3, 31 KOs) went away to training camp for his last fight against Seth Mitchell, whom Arreola knocked out in the first round Sept. 7 in Indio, Calif., to rejuvenate a crumbling career.

"There comes a time in life where someone that has not really put his full attention to his craft finally realizes, 'I had better do it now,'" said Dan Goossen, Arreola's promoter. "That's the Chris Arreola I see today. Going into the Stiverne fight, going into the Klitschko fight, going into a lot of his fights, I just think he believed that his toughness and grittiness and ability would carry him through. But I just think he has come to realize that the results he saw against Seth Mitchell are the type of results you get when you give 100 percent to getting prepared."

Dominating Mitchell (26-2-1, 19 KOs), a former Michigan State linebacker beset by an unreliable chin, didn't just make Arreola appreciate the importance of training like a professional prizefighter. His impressive victory also put him into the perfect position of having the chance to avenge his loss to Stiverne (23-1-1, 20 KOs) and become the first fighter of Mexican heritage to win a recognized heavyweight title all in one fight.

Henry Ramirez, Arreola's trainer the past 11 years, believes this rededicated Arreola is here to stay.

"I think he realized that window of opportunity wasn't going to be open forever," Ramirez said. "After losing to Stiverne, he was really motivated for the Mitchell fight, extremely motivated. He was saying in a lot of interviews, 'If I lose to Seth Mitchell, I'm going to retire.' People were asking, 'What do you think of that?' I said, 'If he loses to Seth Mitchell, I'm going to encourage it.' He just knew his back was against the wall."

'I THINK HE REALIZED THAT WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY WASN'T GOING TO BE OPEN FOREVER.'
– HENRY RAMIREZ

That pressure pushed Arreola to rent a house in Scottsdale, Ariz., prior to the Mitchell fight. "The Nightmare" trained at a gym in nearby Phoenix, and Ramirez kept the keys to their SUV so Arreola couldn't go AWOL, as he sometimes did during training camps back home in Riverside. At press time for this issue, they were considering a return to the Phoenix area to train for the Stiverne rematch or have Arreola temporarily move into Ramirez's home to help keep him focused.

"Chris' problem isn't him training," Ramirez said. "Whenever he makes it to the gym here at home, he's fine. He'll work his [butt] off. The problem at home is that he wouldn't always make it. It's a 10-minute or 15-minute drive from his house in Riverside, and something would always come up. In Arizona, we all lived in the same house, so it was very, very structured. It was, 'OK, we'll be at the gym at this time. We'll do conditioning at this time in the evening.' I knew his whereabouts every single minute of every single day."

The thought of every single minute of every single round of his loss to Stiverne aggravates Arreola.

The first two rounds were relatively uneventful, but Stiverne changed the fight for good with a devastating right hand he landed just before the bell to end the third round of a 12-round bout HBO broadcast from Citizens Business Bank Arena in Ontario, Calif., about 20 miles from Riverside. The Haitian-born, Quebec-bred contender crushed Arreola with a right hand his bigger, supposedly stronger opponent never saw coming. The punishing punch dropped Arreola for just the second time in his 10-year pro career and broke his nose.

Forced to breathe through his mouth for the remaining nine rounds, an under-conditioned Arreola couldn't cut off the ring against the fleet-footed Stiverne, who out-boxed Arreola to win by large margins on the scorecards of judges Carla Caiz (117-110), Marty Denkin (118-109) and

ADMIRATION FOR KLITSCHKO

Arreola (left) didn't fare well in his only fight for a world title, against Vitali Klitschko in 2009.

Chris Arreola would've loved to get another shot at Vitali Klitschko.

Arreola's technical knockout loss to Klitschko in their September 2009 fight for Klitschko's WBC heavyweight title will always bother him. But he has even more respect now for the 42-year-old Klitschko (45-2, 41 KOs), who recently relinquished the WBC title to prepare for a run at the Ukrainian presidency in 2015, than the night their fight ended.

"If he has the opportunity to do something like that, to help his community and help his family, the people that need the help the most, my hat goes off to him," Arreola said. "I respect him for that, especially in a country that's war-torn like that, with all those riots and everything that goes on there. He's doing the right thing. He's trying to help his country."

Since Klitschko retired in December, the WBC ordered a rematch between Bermane Stiverne (23-1-1, 20 KOs) and Arreola (36-3, 31 KOs) for its vacant heavyweight title. The WBC also named Klitschko its champion emeritus, which would allow him to box whoever holds the WBC heavyweight title in his first fight back if he decides to return to boxing. Klitschko believes he has retired for good this time, but Arreola has learned to never say never in this sport.

"I lost to the best," Arreola said of Klitschko. "I have no excuses for it. I lost to the best. He was the best at that time and probably one of the best of this era. I'll have no shame winning the title against Stiverne. Everyone's reign has to end and someone else's begins. That's how I take it. My respect goes out to Vitali Klitschko and if he ever thinks about coming back, and I have the title, I'll be waiting for him."

It's more likely that Arreola eventually would face Vitali Klitschko's younger brother, Wladimir Klitschko, in a unification fight if he defeats Stiverne. Wladimir Klitschko (61-3, 51 KOs) is THE RING's heavyweight champion and also owns the IBF, WBA and WBO titles.

"I've got to beat Stiverne," Arreola said. "But after I defeat Stiverne, I want to unify the belts. I want to be the undisputed heavyweight champion. It hasn't been done for a long time, and I want to be that guy to do it. Wladimir, he has to take care of [WBO mandatory challenger Alex] Leapai. Good luck with that. But my job is Stiverne. After that, we'll worry about Wladimir."

— Keith Idec

Arreola (right) rejuvenated his career with a first-round knockout of Seth Mitchell in September.

Claude Paquette (117-110).

"That [bleeping] right hand, I didn't see it coming, and those are the ones that hurt the most," Arreola said. "Once my nose was broken, I kept trying. But every punch after that was the most painful, excruciating punch I ever got hit with. I'm the kind of fighter that brings the fight to somebody, and I couldn't do it because every time I got inside, I got punched, and it hurt so bad.

"I still had the will to win. We're in the heavyweight division, man, and all I needed was one punch. I just couldn't catch him. I couldn't breathe, but I kept trying, man. I'm in it to win it, regardless of anything. I had to breathe through my mouth. I was swallowing blood. The bleeding part is what it is. That's part of boxing. But the pain was the excruciating part about it, because I'm the one that brings the fight to somebody, I'm the one that dictates the pace, and I really couldn't do it."

A regretful Arreola weighed in at 247 pounds for the Stiverne fight, one pound less than the 6-foot-2 Stiverne. He has weighed at least 247 for each of his three professional defeats, but was even heavier for his losses to Klitschko (251), which was stopped after 10 one-sided

Sultan Ibragimov (left) dethroned the last U.S. heavyweight titleholder, Shannon Briggs.

LONGEST DROUGHT

The current championship drought for American heavyweights is by far the longest in history. Here are the four longest periods in which no U.S. big man held at least one major title.

rounds in September 2009 at Staples Center in Los Angeles, and Tomasz Adamek (250½), who won a 12-round majority decision over Arreola seven months later at Citizens Business Bank Arena.

Arreola, ranked No. 7 among THE RING's heavyweight contenders, considers his optimum fighting weight anywhere in the high 230s or low 240s. He weighed 242 for the Mitchell fight, yet is much more concerned with knowing he is in great shape than hitting a specific number on a scale the day before the Stiverne rematch.

"I'm not going to give no excuses on how I trained for our first fight," Arreola said. "Did I train how I was supposed to? Hell no. I should've trained a lot harder for Stiverne. I took Stiverne lightly. Out of a week, I probably went three, four days out of the week [to train], and that's pushing it.

"My training wasn't up to par, but that's no excuse for why I lost. Stiverne beat me. He kicked my ass. It is what it is. I'm going to give him respect. I'm not going to be like Victor Ortiz, and say, 'Oh, he hit me with a lucky punch.' [Forget] that. He hit me. He made that punch happen. And now I'm going to make a lot of punches happen on his head."

If Arreola makes good on his promise and avenges the Stiverne setback, the proud Mexican-American will not only become the first boxer of Mexican descent to win a recognized heavyweight title. Beating Stiverne, ranked No. 4 by THE RING, also would allow Arreola to become the first American to a hold a version of the heavyweight championship since Shannon Briggs in 2007.

"I've always dreamed about being a champion," Arreola said. "I never thought I'd be a heavyweight, but I always dreamt about being a champion. Now that I'm a heavyweight, what an honor it would be. Not only that, I'd be bringing the title back to America. I'm a proud American, first and foremost. I want everybody to know that. My father [Agustin Arreola] and mother [Lucy Rivera] came to the United States [from Mexico] so that when they had kids, they'd have a better life, that they could live life the way you're supposed to. I thank my parents for having me in America, because I love it."

Many fans have loved Arreola since he became a regular on premium cable channels in 2008 because he's a powerful puncher, has more than enough defensive flaws to make most of his fights thoroughly entertaining and often gives honest, hilarious post-fight interviews. Still, his losses and seemingly never-ending training issues have worn on those who no longer consider him championship material. They've driven Arreola and his handlers as they've prepared to take one last run at heavyweight history.

"It would be great to shut some people up," Ramirez said. "You've got naysayers and detractors. I think it'd be great. He's been the target of much ridicule for various reasons, for his weight and for the way he speaks. And I'm not going to say a lot of it hasn't been deserved. But I think it would be great to see him overcome himself, more than anyone, to get to the top."

That's where Ramirez thought Arreola was headed the night he made his pro debut in September 2003. Ten years and three losses later, Ramirez has legitimate reasons to believe "The Nightmare" isn't over just yet. RING

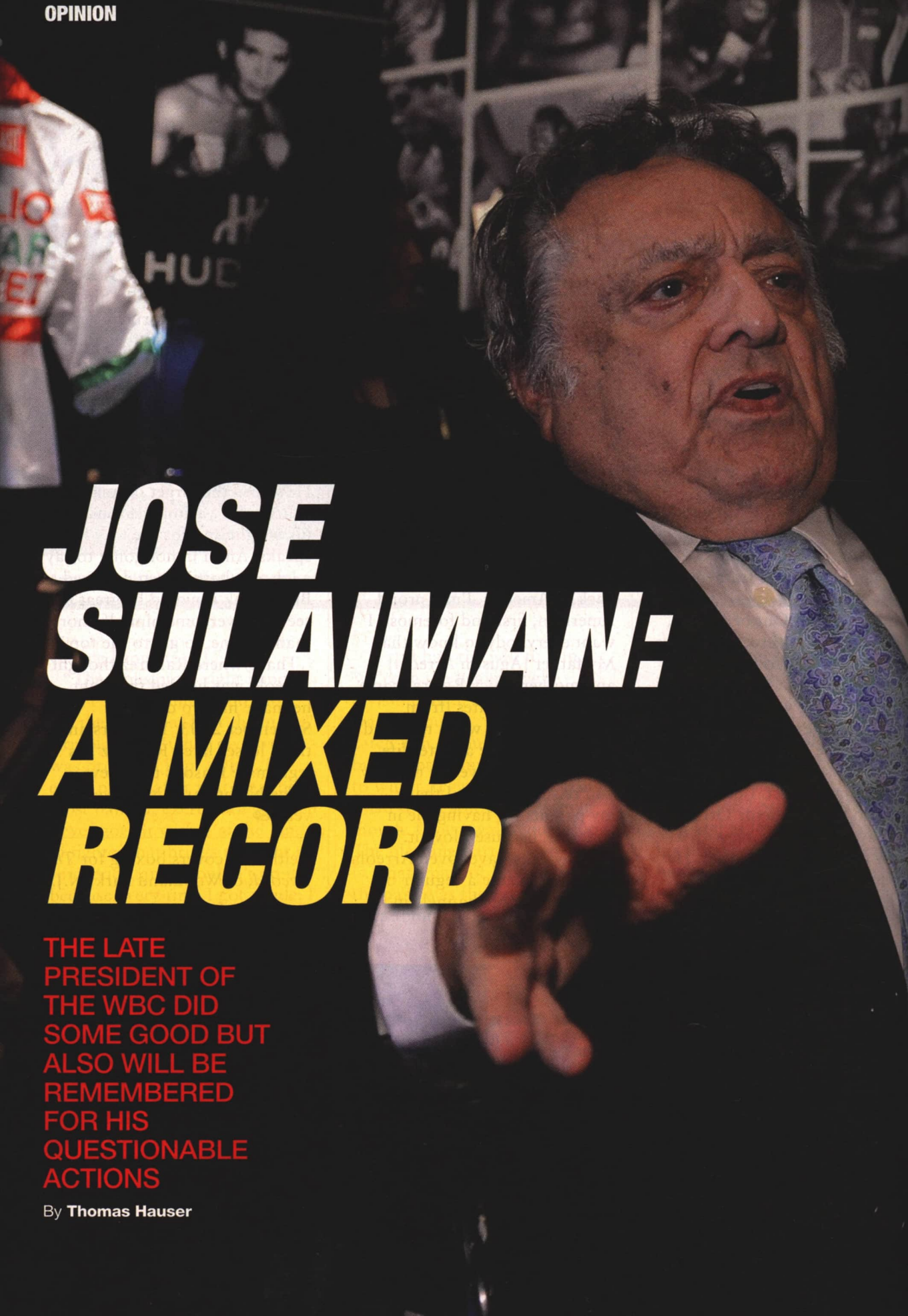
Keith Idec covers boxing for *The Record*, of Woodland Park, N.J.

6 YEARS, 9 MONTHS
★ **Lost it:** Shannon Briggs (U.S.) lost the WBO title to Sultan Ibragimov (Russia) on a decision June 2, 2007. ★ **Won it back:** No American has held a title since.

2 YEARS, 10 MONTHS
★ **Lost it:** Marvin Hart (U.S.) lost the championship to Tommy Burns (Canada) on a decision Feb. 23, 1906. ★ **Won it back:** Jack Johnson (U.S.) stopped Burns on Dec. 26, 1908.

2 YEARS, 3 MONTHS
★ **Lost it:** James J. Corbett (U.S.) lost the championship to Bob Fitzsimmons (U.K.) by knockout March 17, 1897. ★ **Won it back:** James J. Jeffries (U.S.) stopped Fitzsimmons on June 9, 1899.

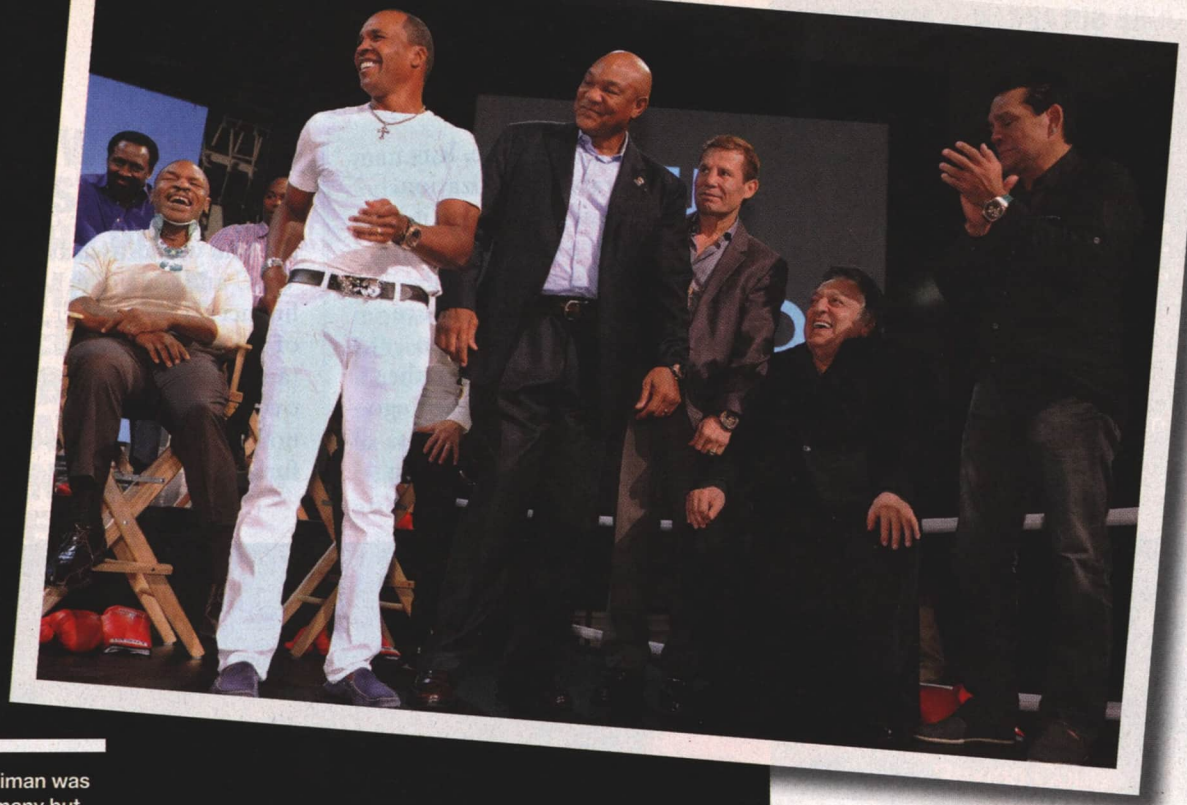
2 YEARS, 0 MONTHS
★ **Lost it:** Gene Tunney (U.S.) retired July 31, 1928, after which the title remained vacant for almost two years. Max Schmeling (Germany) defeated Jack Sharkey (U.S.) on a foul to win the championship on June 12, 1930. ★ **Won it back:** Sharkey outpointed Schmeling in a rematch to win the title June 21, 1932. We're not including the period during which the title was vacant for the purposes of this chart.



JOSE SULAIMAN: A MIXED RECORD

THE LATE PRESIDENT OF THE WBC DID SOME GOOD BUT ALSO WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS QUESTIONABLE ACTIONS

By **Thomas Hauser**



Jose Sulaiman was loved by many but not everyone.

Jose Sulaiman, who built the World Boxing Council into a global empire, died in Los Angeles on Jan. 16. He had undergone open heart surgery at UCLA's Ronald Reagan Hospital on Oct. 1 of last year and was in an intensive care unit for 50 days afterward. He never fully recovered.

Sulaiman was a master diplomat and a man of great personal charm. *Guinness World Records* affirms that his 38-year reign as president of the WBC made him "the longest-serving president of a world sports organization."

Under Sulaiman's leadership, the WBC expanded to 161 member countries. To Sulaiman's credit, he took a stand in the 1970s against the sanctioning of championship fights in apartheid South Africa. He also led the way in cutting world championship fights from 15 to 12 rounds, which I believe was a sincere effort to protect the health of fighters.

There were people, including members of Jose's family, who genuinely loved him. They have my sincere condolences. But it would be a disservice to history to not deal honestly with the whole of Sulaiman's legacy.

The WBC is officially designated as a not-for-profit corporation organized under Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code. It is not a charitable organization. But morally, if not legally, it is charged with a public trust.

It was widely understood throughout Sulaiman's tenure as president that the way to get what one wanted from the WBC was to massage Jose's ego and add to the WBC's coffers. He wasn't the only corrupting influence in boxing, but he was one of them.

It was never quite clear where the line was drawn between the WBC and Sulaiman's personal finances. One former member of the WBC board of governors (a successful businessman in his own right) observed, "There's no budget. There's no reserve fund. There's no money set aside

Sulaiman (left) was often surrounded by the best in the business.

IT WAS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD ... THAT THE WAY TO GET WHAT ONE WANTED FROM THE WBC WAS TO MASSAGE JOSE'S EGO AND ADD TO THE WBC'S COFFERS.

for hard times and no financial accountability that I'm aware of. No matter how much we take in, there's never any money left at the end of the year. It's all spent, and that's very suspicious to me."

More notably, the WBC (like the other major world sanctioning organizations) was characterized by unconscionable rankings and a multiplicity of titles (world champions, interim champions, silver champions, champions emeritus) that ensured an endless stream of sanctioning fees but demeaned the sport.

Sulaiman's reign was also marked by the shameless attempt to deprive Buster Douglas of the WBC heavyweight title after he knocked out Mike Tyson in Tokyo; the appointment of judges who deprived Pernell Whitaker of victory over Julio Cesar Chavez; and the misappropriation of Sergio Martinez's crown in favor of Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

These abuses and others like them didn't happen by accident. For each fighter, promoter, or manager who benefited from a Sulaiman favor, there were others whose dreams were crushed by his unsettling ways.

There was one historic moment of accountability. On March 21, 1998, Graciano Rocchigiani thought he had won the vacant WBC light heavyweight championship by beating Michael Nunn. Then, after the fact, he was told that he had only fought for an "interim belt" and Roy Jones (who paid substantial sanctioning fees to the WBC by virtue of his multi-fight contract with HBO) was the real WBC champion.

Rocchigiani sued the WBC in federal court in the United States and won a $31 million judgment. Sulaiman then threatened to take the WBC into bankruptcy and create a new sanctioning body unless the fighter accepted a lesser amount. That led writer Tim Graham to observe, "The WBC has filed for bankruptcy to avoid paying a $31 million court judgment. Just being morally bankrupt apparently wasn't good enough." Ultimately, the matter was settled with the WBC agreeing to pay $1.2 million up front to Rocchigiani plus $300,000 a year for 10 years.

Jose Sulaiman had a passion for boxing. It's sad when someone who has the potential to do so much good doesn't get the maximum good out of his powers. I wish he had listened to his better angels and used his remarkable skills to advance boxing in a more self-sacrificing way. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Straight Writes and Jabs: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

JOSE SULAIMAN AT A GLANCE

May 30, 1931 – Born in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico. His father was an immigrant from Lebanon.

1947 – Became a junior boxing commissioner in San Luis Potosi, his home state in Mexico, after boxing as a boy.

1968 – Began working for the World Boxing Council.

1975 – Elected president of the WBC, a position he held until his death.

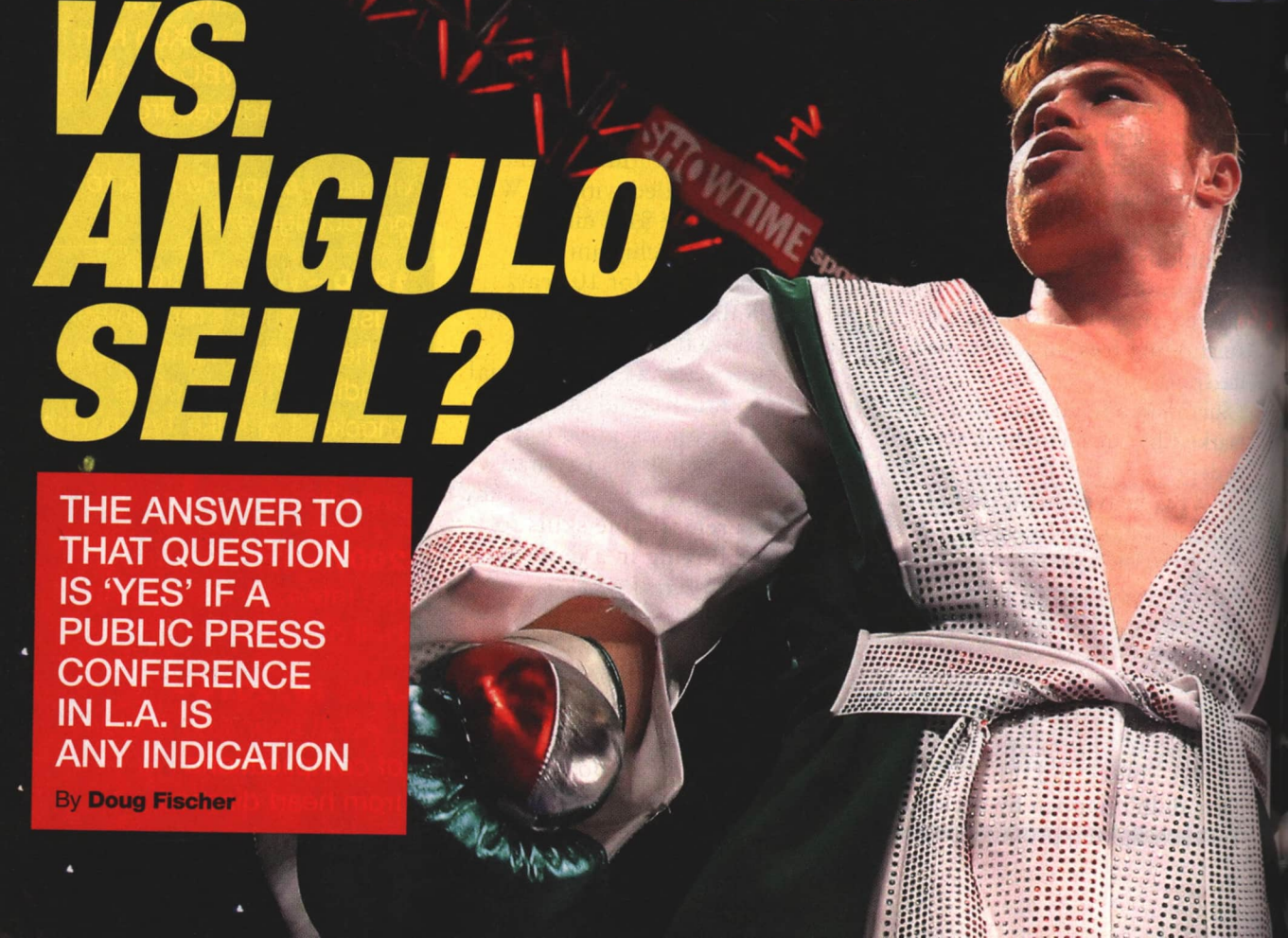
1982 – Announced after the death of Duk Koo Kim in the ring that WBC title fights would be reduced from 15 to 12 rounds, only one of many steps he took to protect fighters.

1990 – Withheld from Buster Douglas recognition as heavyweight champion pending a review of his knockout of Mike Tyson, one of many times his actions drew heavy criticism.

2007 – Inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Jan. 16, 2014 – Died at 82 in Los Angeles of complications from heart disease.

WILL ALVAREZ VS. ANGULO SELL?



THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS 'YES' IF A PUBLIC PRESS CONFERENCE IN L.A. IS ANY INDICATION

By **Doug Fischer**

Alfredo Angulo (at the top of the previous page) is arguably the most potent offensive threat Canelo Alvarez has faced.

LOS ANGELES – Canelo Alvarez and Alfredo Angulo kept their comments brief and direct, as did the undercard fighters, during the kick-off press conference in downtown L.A. for the March 8 pay-per-view event in Las Vegas.

Everyone said basically the same thing at the podium: "I come to fight, and I expect a good fight."

Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer expects the MGM Grand Garden Arena, which holds about 16,000 for boxing events, to be sold out well before fight week.

But the big question for Showtime and Golden Boy Promotions, which teamed up to make many quality cards last year, is this: Will there be enough pay-per-view buys to make the show a financial success?

If fan turnout at the presser and advance ticket sales are any indication, there's a good chance that "Toe To Toe: Canelo vs. Angulo" (the card's official title) will do solid business.

During the outdoor event, a large group of Alvarez fans, many of whom were female, loudly chanted the redhead's moniker – Spanish for "Cinnamon" – a familiar sound to the former junior middleweight champ who lost his 154-pound titles to Floyd Mayweather Jr. via unanimous decision in his last bout.

However, Angulo, who is also coming off a loss – a thrilling 10th-round stoppage against Erislandy Lara last June – also had a vocal group of supporters present at the media event. They booed whenever Alvarez spoke and barked whenever Angulo, nicknamed "El Perro" ("The Dog"), was at the mic.

This is good news for the promotion. Alvarez still has fans after laying an egg against Mayweather last September and probably collected a few haters, who also lay out money to buy fights. And while Angulo is not a superstar, he is an exciting fighter with passionate backing.

If Showtime and Golden Boy are lucky, a significant number of fans will pay to see Alvarez win, while others will pay to see him lose, and a third group — probably the hardcore fan base — will pay to see Angulo upset the 23-year-old.

"I'm glad that many of his fans are here," Alvarez (42-1-1, 30 knockouts) said of Angulo's barking supporters. "But my fans are better."

Accordingly, the Guadalajara native said he wants to give those fans a better fight than he produced against Mayweather, who dominated him in a tactical chess match. He couldn't have picked a better opponent than Angulo, a pure pressure fighter with a debilitating body attack and a hard left hook – the punch that floored Lara twice during their fight.

If Angulo can make for a compelling fight against Lara, a former Cuban amateur star who has been in his share of stinkers, he should be able help Alvarez rekindle the excitement.

"Why fight Alfredo Angulo?" Alvarez asked rhetorically, "Because he's a good fighter and a strong fighter who comes forward. He can take a punch, and he can give a punch."

"Giving punches" is exactly what should be expected from Angulo (22-3, 18 KOs), a 31-year-old Mexicali native who represented Mexico in the 2004 Olympics. In fact, he is arguably the biggest offensive threat that Alvarez has ever faced.

Alvarez has faced strong

fighters, such as Shane Mosley and Carlos Baldomir, but unlike those former champs, Angulo is still in his athletic prime. Alvarez has faced big fighters, such as Kermit Cintron and Austin Trout, but unlike those tall and rangy boxers who elected to operate from a distance, Angulo will physically impose himself on the young Mexican star from the opening bell.

That's just what he does. Angulo says his rugged pressure fighting style is the reason he continues to have fans despite the setbacks he's suffered, such as the Lara fight or his 2011 stoppage loss to James Kirkland.

"I'm the same Alfredo Angulo," he said. "That's what I do in every fight. I've earned my respect with my fights and the way I fight."

Angulo's trainer, Virgil Hunter, had the most to say about the matchup.

"I think the fight will come down to what each fighter did in his last fight," Hunter said. "Their last fight says a lot about each man. Alfredo had Erislandy Lara. He had him, but he had an unfortunate accident with getting a thumb in his eye. Canelo has implied that Floyd Mayweather ran from him. Well, Erislandy Lara is known to move around a lot, and Alfredo Angulo employed a strategy that dealt with it, and he gave Lara the worst beating in the Cuban's career.

"Saul should have employed a strategy to deal with what Floyd gave him. But in this fight, there will be no running. Each man has to sleep at night wondering why he lost his last bout, and each has to decide what he's going to do in his next bout."

On March 8, boxing fans will have to decide if finding out is worth paying for.

TOE-TO-TOE UNDERCARD

Schaefer believes Golden Boy has stacked the pay-per-view undercard enough to earn buys from hardcore fight fans – especially Mexican and Mexican-American fans.

"We'll be celebrating Cinco de Mayo on Ocho de Marzo," Schaefer joked.

Carlos Molina (22-5-2, 6 KOs), a Chicago-based native of Michoacan, Mexico, will defend his IBF junior middleweight title against undefeated prospect Jermall Charlo (17-0, 13 KOs) in the opening bout of the pay-per-view broadcast.

In the second bout of the card, Ricardo Alvarez, Canelo's brother, will take on unbeaten WBC lightweight beltholder Omar Figueroa, a 23-year-old Mexican-American slugger whose popularity is growing in his native Texas.

Many fans and ringsiders thought Alvarez (23-2-3, 14 KOs) was lucky to get a majority decision over Rod Salka in his last bout on Dec. 14. However, Salka is a crafty and mobile boxer with a good jab. Figueroa (22-0-1, 17 KOs) is a decent boxer, but he'd much rather fight. So Alvarez, who likes to walk his opponents down, won't have to look for "Panterita."

To get an idea of Figueroa's appetite for violence all one needs to do is watch his brutal 12-round war with Nihito Arakawa, which earned him the WBC's interim belt last July. It remains to be seen whether Alvarez is as tough as the Japanese veteran, who will take on talented Jorge Linares in a 10-round "freeview" preceding the pay-per-view card.

And Leo Santa Cruz will defend his WBC junior featherweight title against Cristian Mijares, a skilled but gutsy Mexican veteran and former 115-pound beltholder.

Santa Cruz (26-0-1, 15 KOs) is a Mexican-American from Los Angeles, but the 25-year-old two-division titleholder has a Mexican fighting style, and he's more comfortable speaking Spanish than English.

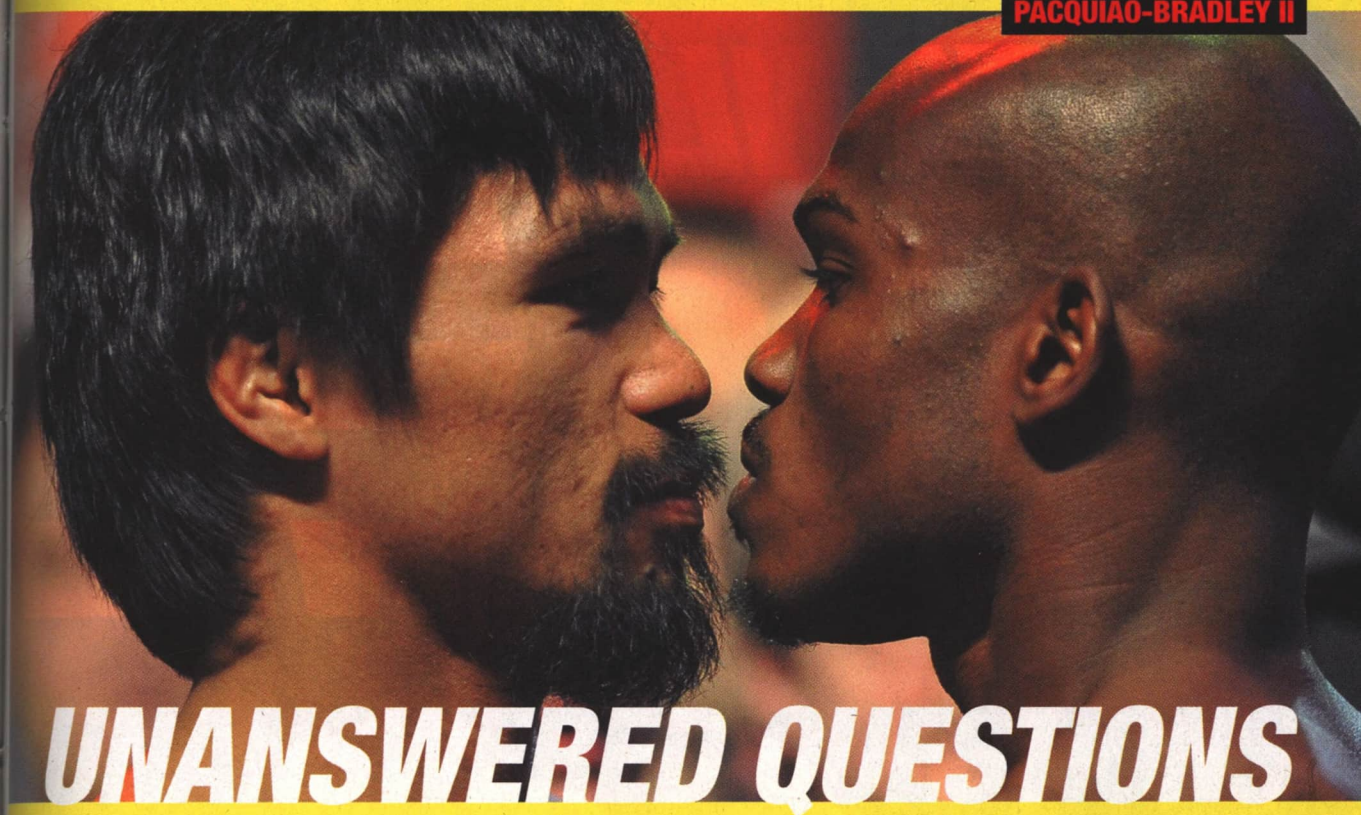
Mijares (49-7-2, 24 KOs), a 32-year-old southpaw from Durango, is 14-1 in his last 15 bouts, which includes a decision over Alberto Rojas for the IBF 115-pound title and a ninth-round TKO of former 122-pound champ Rafael Marquez in a featherweight bout. The lone loss in that 15-bout stretch was a split decision to Victor Terrazas, who Santa Cruz crushed in three rounds last August to win the WBC 122-pound belt.

"I'm happy to be in the co-featured bout of such a big card," Mijares said. "I know Leo Santa Cruz is a good fighter, so I'm motivated for this fight. It's going to be a war."

Although Mijares is a smart and savvy boxer, he's been in his share of tough fights against the best fighters of three weight classes (junior bantamweight, bantamweight and junior featherweight). He has lost to Vic Darchinyan and Nehomar Cermeno (twice); and he has scored victories over Jorge Arce, Alexander Munoz, Katsushige Kawashima (twice), Chatchai Saskul and Tomas Rojas.

Mijares also owns a 2008 split decision over former junior bantamweight contender and title challenger Jose Navarro. Santa Cruz, a 19-year-old prospect with only five pro bouts under his belt at the time, sparred with Navarro to help the 2000 U.S. Olympian prepare for Mijares.

"I've known about Mijares ever since the Navarro fight," Santa Cruz said. "I've watched him fight over the years, and I know he's a great fighter." RING



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

PACQUIAO, BRADLEY, JUDGES WILL HAVE A DO-OVER

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Manny Pacquiao and Timothy Bradley will have the opportunity to set the record straight on April 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Neither received satisfaction the first time they met, on June 9, 2012, in the same arena. The loser (Pacquiao) was cheated, in the opinion of most people, and the winner (Bradley) received very little credit.

So their second meeting, which was announced a few days before our press time, will be like a do-over, an unusual chance for both fighters – and officials – to get it right.

A lot has happened since Pacquiao-Bradley I.

Pacquiao was stopped by a single punch from Juan Manuel Marquez six months after the Bradley fight. He bounced back with a victory over Brandon Rios almost a year later, which reaffirmed the Filipino's status as an elite fighter.

Bradley survived a war with Ruslan Provodnikov in March of last year that was so brutal Bradley had headaches and slurred speech for weeks afterward. He outboxed Marquez seven months later to prove he was not damaged goods and remain undefeated.

That leads us to April 12 and many questions.

Manny Pacquiao (left) and Timothy Bradley will be face to face in the ring again on April 12.

Was Bradley really hindered by foot injuries in the first meeting, as he claimed? If so, does that mean Pacquiao could be in trouble against a healthy Bradley?

Pacquiao did enough to win the first fight but fought mostly in spurts, which was uncharacteristic of him. Was he showing signs of age? He's 35 now. He had an easy time with Rios. Will he have enough for a quicker, more skillful Bradley?

Bradley decided to fight Provodnikov toe to toe because he wanted to score a knockout, which he felt would make a statement after the Pacquiao debacle. Will he do the same thing on April 12? If he does, would that play into Pacquiao's hands?

Will Bradley opt for the more cautious approach he took against Marquez? If so, will that leave Pacquiao – and the fans – frustrated?

Pacquiao has more punching power than Marquez. Will the pounding Bradley took against Provodnikov haunt him when Pacquiao lands one or two hard shots?

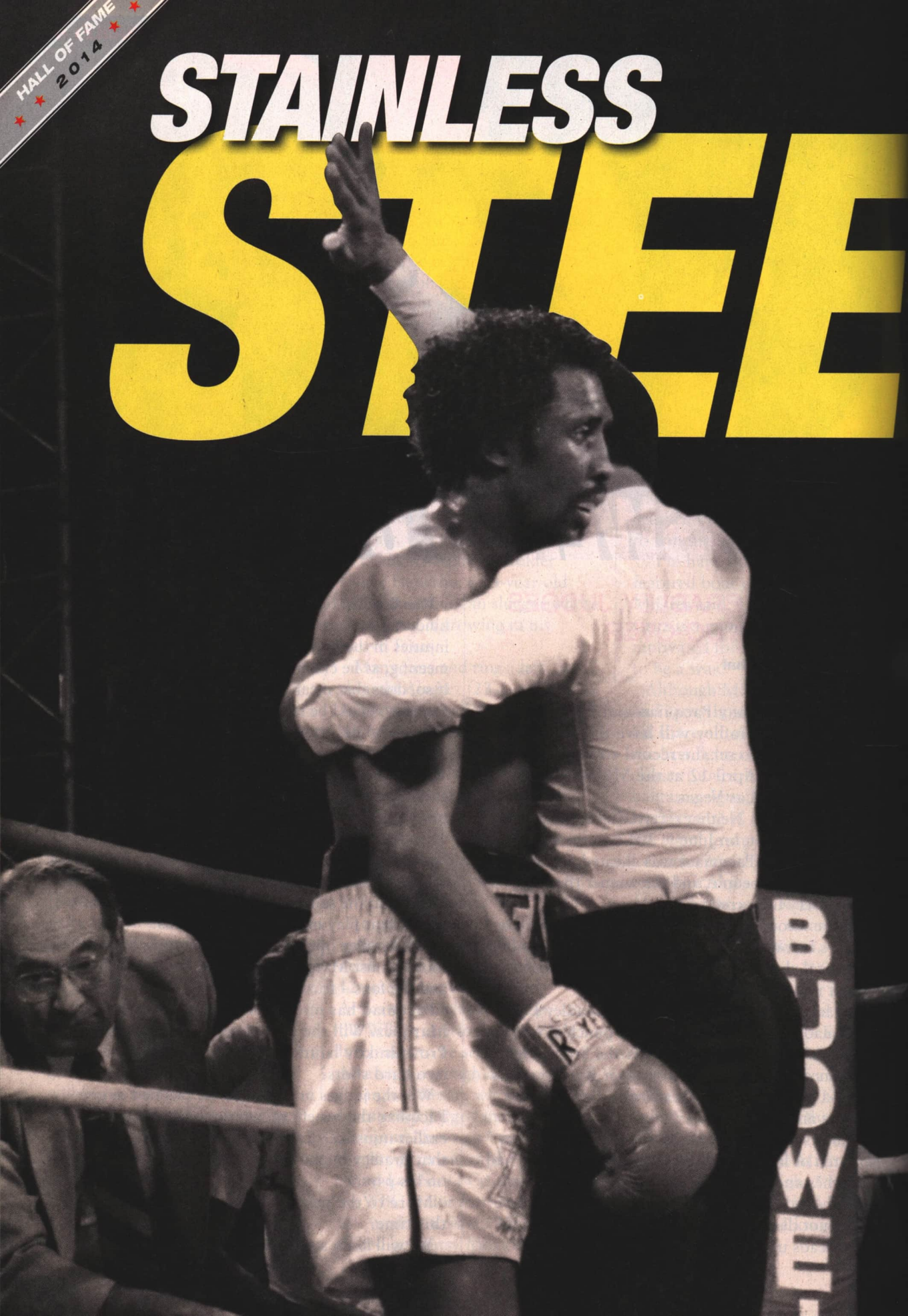
Will the judges in Las Vegas be inclined to give Pacquiao the benefit of any doubt because of the earlier injustice? Even if they don't, will the notion that Bradley might not get a fair shake weigh heavily on his psyche?

More to the point: Will the judges get it right this time?

We will learn a great deal on April 12.

HALL OF FAME 2014

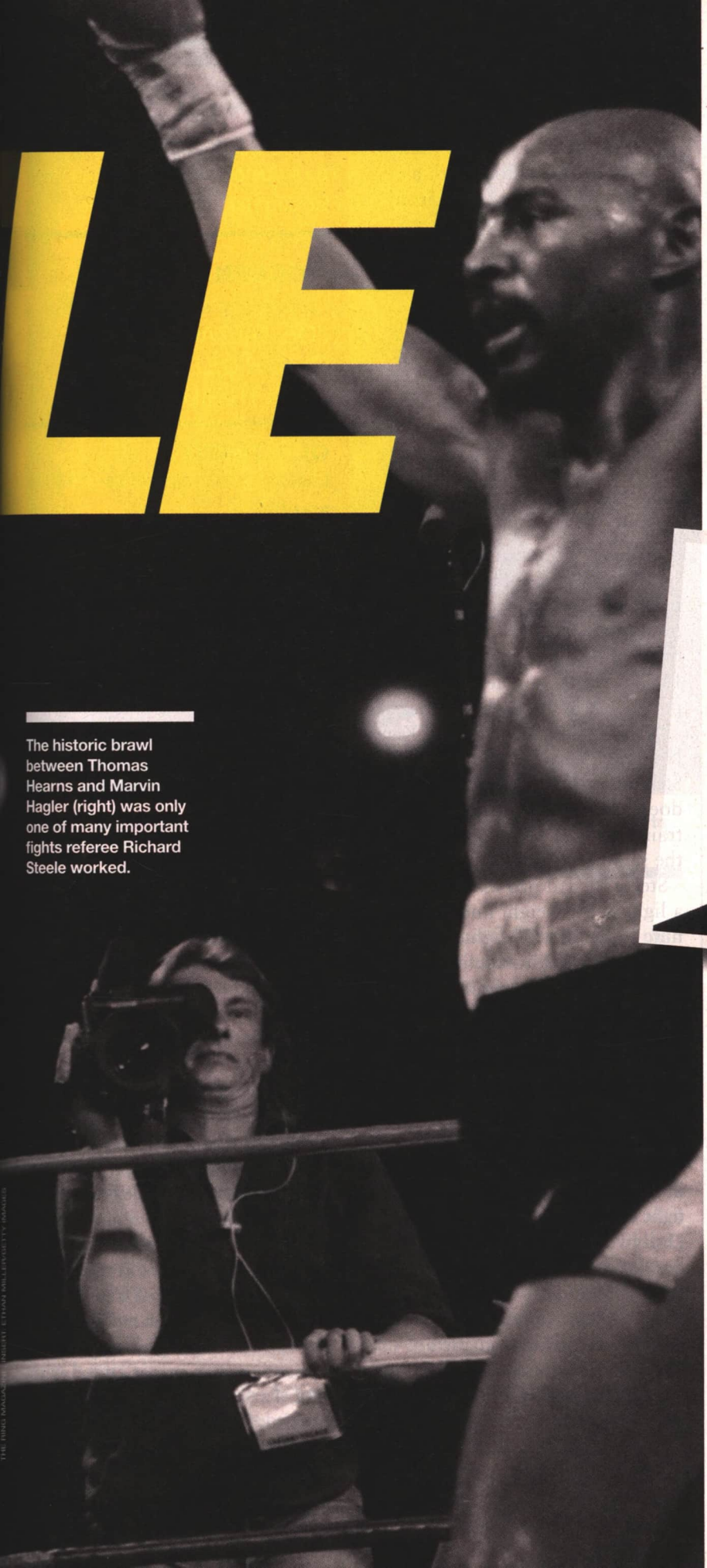
STAINLESS STEE



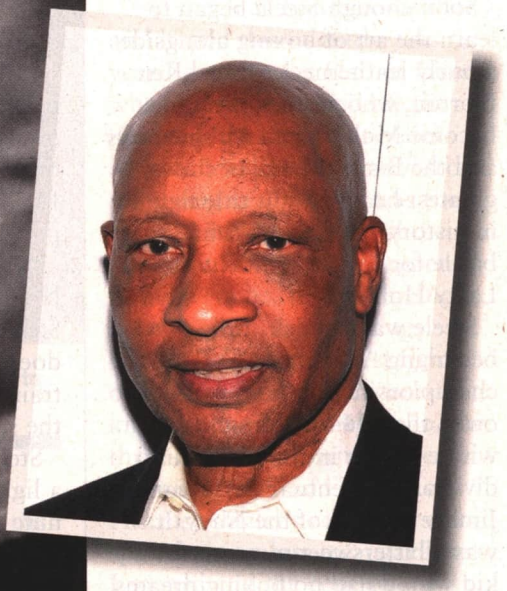
LE

BOXING FANS WILL ALWAYS DEBATE THE CHAVEZ-TAYLOR STOPPAGE BUT EVERYONE CAN AGREE THAT **RICHARD STEELE** WAS A GOOD REFEREE

By **Ron Borges**



The historic brawl between Thomas Hearns and Marvin Hagler (right) was only one of many important fights referee Richard Steele worked.



Richard Steele's long road from at-risk youth in the streets of Los Angeles to the International Boxing Hall of Fame began, fittingly, with someone trying to give him a beating. Isn't that how it usually starts in boxing?

"It started as a joke," the 70-year-old Steele recently recalled while discussing his rise from high-school dropout to one of the finest referees in boxing history. "I started boxing in the Marine Corps because my DI ['drill instructor' in boot camp at Camp Pendleton, the massive Marine Corps base outside San Diego] was trying to

get me beat up.

"He put me in the ring with another platoon bad guy, and I ended up winning. After that, anytime somebody had someone who was supposed to be a problem, I was the company's guy [to fight him]. I didn't know how to box, but fighting was something that always came to me. I'd been fighting all my life.

"I knew how to fight. I just didn't know how to box. Fortunately, the guys they made me fight didn't know how to box, either."

Soon enough Steele began to learn the art of boxing alongside a burly leatherneck named Ken Norton, who would go on to become Muhammad Ali's nemesis and the B-side of one of the greatest heavyweight title fights in history, his epic 15-round battle for the WBC title with Larry Holmes.

Steele was a quick study, becoming All-Marine Corps champion in 1963 and going on to the 1964 Olympic Trials, where he lost in the 165-pound division to eventual Olympian Jimmy Rosette of the Navy. It was a bittersweet moment for a kid who'd had no boxing dreams just three years earlier but unwittingly had found his calling.

"Once I started to learn the skills I began to see things I was capable of," recalled Steele, who will join Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad and Joe Calzaghe among the members of the 2014 Hall of Fame class in June. "That's one of the things boxing can do for a young man. It can teach him discipline and show him he can accomplish something.

"I was a high-school dropout, but after that I went back and got my degree. When I got to the Trials, my only disappointment was the guy who beat me won the whole thing and then lost his first fight at the Olympics. I figured I could have done that."

Steele tells that story with a deep baritone chuckle, the irony of what happened amusing a man whose life would become intertwined with boxing for the next 50 years.

After the Trials, Steele's hitch in the Marines was nearly over. When it ended, he came home to L.A. and was introduced to two men who would continue his transition into the boxing life: Jackie McCoy and Eddie Futch.

McCoy, a legendary Southern California fight manager, took over Steele's career, and Futch, who many believe is the greatest trainer ever, took over his preparations. Futch asked him one day if he'd ever heard of a Marine from San Diego who people said could fight a little.

"Eddie asked me if I knew Ken Norton and if he had any talent," Steele said. "I said 'Hell yeah he does.' That's when Eddie began to train him, and we fought out of the same camp."

Steele turned pro in 1966 as a light heavyweight and won nine of his first 10 fights, eight by knockout. All were in the legendary old fight house at 1801 S. Grand Avenue in L.A., the Olympic Auditorium, which was the breeding ground for great fighters from the 1930s to the late '70s.

Nearly every great Southern California fighter appeared there in those years, the weekend fight cards attracting some of Hollywood's biggest celebrities, but as Steele began to have success McCoy found it ever more difficult to find him opponents. So Steele made a fateful decision: He moved to the heavyweight division and there met his match. It was size ... or lack thereof.

"I started to fight heavyweights to get work, and I got my ribs broken three times," Steele said. "The last time [during a split-decision loss to Chuck Hamilton on Oct. 22, 1970, in which Steele dropped Hamilton in the third round] the doctors told me I could have punctured a lung and died. That was it for me. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise."

His four-year career ended with a 12-4 record and no reason to think life would continue to revolve around boxing. Then his phone rang.

CLASS OF 2014

The 12 boxing figures who will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June.

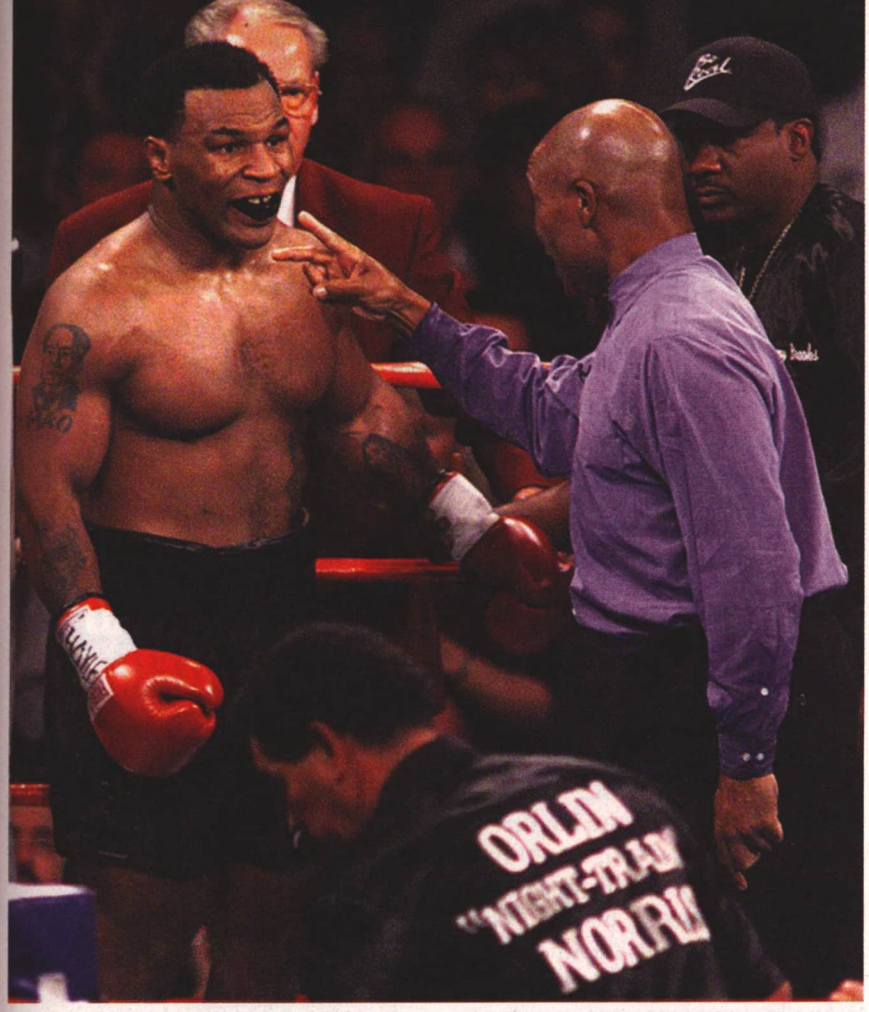
MODERN
Last bout no earlier than 1943
JOE CALZAGHE
OSCAR DE LA HOYA
FELIX TRINIDAD

OLD-TIMER
Last bout must fall between 1893 and 1942
GEORGE CHANEY
CHARLES LEDOUX
MIKE O'DOWD

PIONEER
Last pro bout in or before 1892
TOM ALLEN

NON-PARTICIPANT
EUGENE CORRI, referee
BARRY HEARN, promoter
RICHARD STEELE, referee

OBSERVER
GRAHAM HOUSTON, journalist
NEIL LEIFER, photographer



Steele deducted two points when Mike Tyson dropped Orlin Norris after the bell to end Round 1 of their 1999 fight.

It was a call from the California State Athletic Commission, proposing he begin training to become a referee. It was an idea Steele dismissed as nonsense.

"I told them, 'I don't want to be no referee,'" Steele said. Fortunately he wasn't stubborn about that after Futch took him aside and informed him when opportunity knocks, even if it's the sound of a phone ringing, a man should answer.

"Eddie told me, 'Do you know you'd be only the second black referee in the state of California?'" Steele said. "I called them back."

That was a break for Steele and a bigger one for boxing because thus began a career that would lead him to work 167 world title fights, including some of the biggest matches in the sport's history. But no one starts with a title fight.

It would take Steele 18 months to officiate his first professional fight, working amateur shows as he learned a new trade, one in which space, timing and emotional control mean everything.

"In those years we traveled all over the state," Steele said. "I did a lot of fights practicing in other people's hometowns. It could be a rough time getting out of there depending on how things went for the local boy.

"Oakland. San Diego. Stockton. Bakersfield. San Francisco. Sacramento. I went everywhere to work. When I train referees today, I tell them the way I came up in all those small towns and getting out by the skin of my teeth sometimes. I felt I could referee anywhere."

The first place was the Fairgrounds in El Centro, a boxing way station near the Mexican border, on April 21, 1972. Steele would work four fights that night, three preliminaries and a 10-round fight won by Danny Kimberling. Who knew that 43 years later his phone would ring again as it did in 1970?

"As much as I always wished and hoped this might be the year I got into the Hall of Fame, when my wife handed me the phone, I just could not believe it," said Steele, who retired from refereeing in 2006. "It was the completion of my life. All the good things that have happened to me were because of boxing."

Among those good things were three of the biggest fights of the 1980s: Aaron Pryor's first knockout of Alexis Arguello, the three-round firestorm between Marvin Hagler and Thomas Hearns, Hagler's controversial split-decision loss to Sugar Ray Leonard and the controversial last-second stoppage of the 1990 fight between Julio Cesar Chavez and Meldrick Taylor.

The Chavez-Taylor fight may well be the moment for which Steele is best remembered. With only seconds remaining in a brutal fight Taylor was winning, Chavez dropped him, and when Taylor arose, he was swaying as if he was on the bridge of a destroyer in heavy seas.

Twice Steele asked him if he was all right as he counted to eight. Across the ring, Chavez was like a panther, his muscles tense, his body tilting forward, ready to leap on his wounded prey.

When Taylor did not respond but instead looked away at his manager, Lou Duva, who was climbing onto the ring apron, Steele stopped the fight as the light behind Taylor blinked red, the warning sign that less than 10 seconds remained.

When Steele waved his hands, signaling the fight was over, two seconds were left in the bout. Taylor's cornermen were savage and so was his promoter, Dan Duva. A large contingent of media members agreed, insisting Steele should have let the fight go on.

Steele believed then, and does now, that he was right. His first responsibility, he tells the young referees he trains today, is to protect the fighters. That's what he did to the best of his ability, although the truth is Taylor was never the same after that night.

"Always the safety of the boxer," Steele said when asked what a referee's first job is. "First and foremost. They are putting their lives on the line. You have to be sure you are there when you need to be there and stay out of the way when you don't need to be there. It's a thin line.

"The kid was winning the fight as an amateur and losing it as a professional. Amateur boxing is about scoring points. Professional boxing is about damage. Time makes no difference. If one fighter gets the other in the condition Meldrick Taylor was in – unable to think, unable to talk – the referee has to step in.

"I asked him twice if he was all right. No answer. The doctors told me later the reason he couldn't talk was because the water around his brain had dehydrated. He was in the hospital for four days. I never doubted for a minute the decision I made."

One more punch and who knows what might have happened? No one knows. All they know is a red light flashed and a fight nearly won was lost. A Philadelphia journalist who knew Taylor well still insists he'd earned the right to victory. Richard Steele insists he earned the right to be protected. Maybe the latter is why he is a Hall of Fame referee?

Maybe because all he cared about was being there when a badly wounded fighter needed protection, protection not only from Chavez but from the idea that victory was more important than Taylor was.

"It's a thin line for a referee," Steele said solemnly. "You have to make the decision."

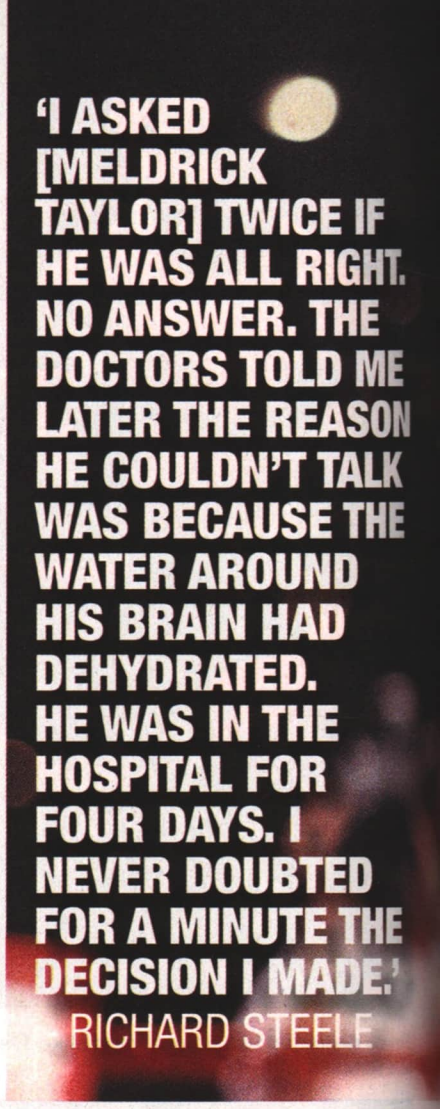
He made one in the Hagler-Hearns fight as well, a fight many consider the most furious eight minutes in boxing history. When Hearns split open the middle of Hagler's forehead, Steele took one look and stepped in, taking Hagler to the ringside doctor.

The middleweight champion was irate. Steele was firm.

"I took pride in always being in shape," Steele said. "I was in top condition that night, and let me tell you, after two rounds, I could barely breathe. I knew they couldn't keep it up, because I knew I couldn't keep it up.

"Hearns hit Marvin with a right hand that split his head open. There was so much blood. Hagler thought I was stopping the fight. He was really pissed off, but the doctor needed to examine him."

The result was that the fight continued but not for long, Hagler finishing Hearns off with a barrage of punches that left the latter in Steele's protective embrace. That night he was on the other side of that thin line but only after he'd been assured that the fight should go on.



"You have to believe in yourself," Steele said. "One of the most important things is space. You can't be too close. You can't be too far away. You have to be aware but relaxed.

"I'm not a spectator. I'm the referee. You can't get mesmerized by what's going on. You can't get caught up in the fight. If [you do] you'll jump in there too early or too late. You have to be relaxed to be there on time, to be able to see what's really going on."

Richard Steele always saw what was going on, first as a young referee on the rise in California and for the past 32 years in Las Vegas, a move he made after being told he would have been asked to work the Larry Holmes-Gerry Cooney fight. He says it was "the biggest fight in history

Steele's last-second stoppage of the fight between Meldrick Taylor (pictured) and Julio Cesar Chavez will always be debated but Taylor clearly was in bad shape.

at the time," but the referees in Nevada were upset about the idea of bringing a California ref in to handle it.

Even though by then he'd already begun to work fights in Las Vegas, that one got away. After it was over, he looked into moving and was told by then-Nevada State Athletic Commissioner Sig Rogich he'd be welcomed. Knowing that, Steele told his wife, "'I have to take it.' I guess it turned out to be the right move."

Making the right move was something Steele was known for throughout his career, not only in the ring but also by not getting into the ring. During the days of apartheid in South Africa, he refused to travel there to referee world title fights. Years later Nelson Mandela would meet Steele and thank him for the stance he took, a moment Steele still remembers.

"I spent several days talking to him," Steele said. "Nelson Mandela is one of the greatest men I ever met. To hear him speak my name was a great moment. When I step up next June to get that Hall of Fame ring, I'll feel the same way I felt that day."

Steele worked his last fight on Aug. 8, 2006. Fittingly it was a WBC world title fight between David Diaz and Jose Armando Santa Cruz for the lightweight title, a fight won in spectacular fashion by Diaz. It came four months after Steele thought he'd retired, a decision made after working an explosive fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Zab Judah that erupted into a near riot. His quick actions helped quell things before members of the Judah camp lost total control of themselves.

"I always said when athletes quit they should quit on top," Steele said. "When Mayweather and Zab had that war, fighting after the bell and all, I thought 'Let me get out of here.'"

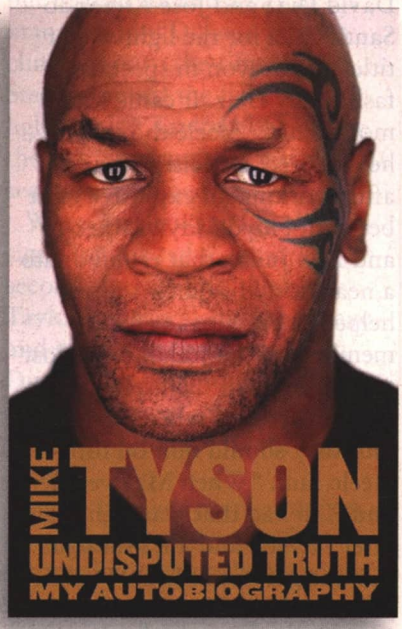
He came back at the NSAC's insistence and worked 16 more fights over the next four months but realized it was time to move on. Since then, he has begun Steele Boxing to serve at-risk youth throughout southern Nevada with a boxing program that emphasizes both the sport and keeping kids in school while also continuing a ministry begun many years ago.

Asked how one rationalizes the unforgiving world of boxing with a ministry, Steele reacted the same way he did for 40 years inside the ring: without hesitation.

"One is to bring pain and one is to relieve pain, but both are to save," Steele said. "Save a kid. Save a fighter. I tell young referees boxing is a sport. It's not like gladiator days, with 'till death do us part.' It's not the days of lions and tigers. All we want to know is who is the best fighter today."

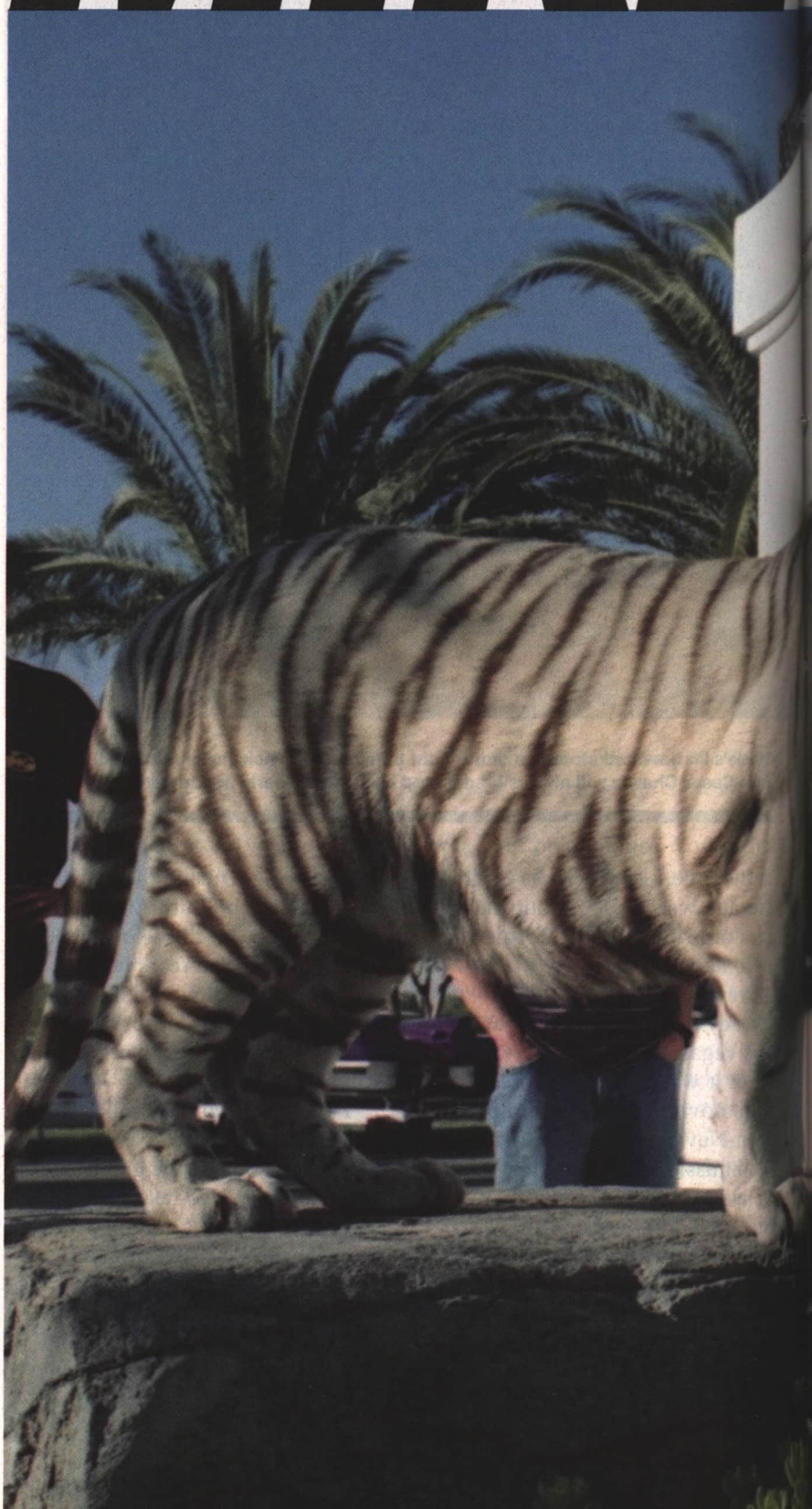
Come next June. we'll be reminded of what we should already know as well: that Richard Steele was as good a third man in the ring as ever stood there. RING

A WORTHWHILE LOOK AT MIKE



UNDISPUTED TRUTH, THE FORMER HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, IS FLAWED BUT COMPELLING

By **Thomas Hauser**



Tommy Brooks, who trained Mike Tyson briefly late in the fighter's career, told the former heavyweight champion, "Man, you're going to be in a wheelchair and people are still going to be wondering what you're up to."

Tyson's autobiography – *Undisputed Truth*, written with Larry Sloman (Blue Rider Press) – helps satisfy that curiosity.

The book's title is a misnomer since some of what Tyson says in it is very much in dispute.

TYSON

Mike Tyson always attracted attention for one reason or another. He is pictured here with a white tiger at his home in 1989.

For example, one can believe or disbelieve him when he states that he didn't rape Desiree Washington and that his conviction was a miscarriage of justice. I've come around to the view that, in Tyson's mind, he was innocent of the charge. But a 12-person jury disagreed with his version of events.

That said, *Undisputed Truth* is worth the read.

The book begins with a chilling recreation of the depraved and degrading environment that Tyson came from. He grew up in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, N.Y., surrounded by violence. For many of his childhood years, the family (which consisted of Mike, his mother, brother and sister) lived in abandoned buildings. His biological father, who sired 17 children by various women, was absent.

Tyson began drinking at age 10 and using cocaine at 11. He slept in the same bed with his mother until he was in his teens, sometimes with one of her lovers beside them.

Much of the book is a recitation of the craziness and exploration of personages that the world already knows: Cus D'Amato, Don King, the managerial team of Jimmy Jacobs and Bill Cayton, Robin Givens, Desiree Washington and others. There's Tyson biting Evander Holyfield's ear and his self-justification because Holyfield had repeatedly head-butted him.

The most vivid portrait is of the man whom one might call Tyson's "creator" – D'Amato.

"Cus wanted the meanest fighter that God ever created," Tyson says. "Someone who scared the life out of people before they even entered the ring. I was the perfect guy for his mission; broken home, unloved, and destitute; hard and strong and sneaky. He trained me to be totally ferocious, in the ring and out. To Cus, my opponents were food. Nourishment. Something you had to eat to live."

There's a lot of graphic sex in *Undisputed Truth*, with prostitutes, with groupies, and in adult clubs.

Tyson admits to having been a substance abuser for most his life and calls himself a "quintessential addict." After beating Trevor Berbick to win the WBC heavyweight crown, he was featured in a "just say no to drugs" television and print advertisement campaign. At the

Tyson writes in his autobiography that promoter Don King (left) was among those who took advantage of his naivete.

same time, he was using drugs and financing a crack enterprise in Brownsville.

"Jimmy [Jacobs] and Bill [Cayton] were intent on stripping away all the Brownsville from me and giving me a positive image," he says. "But I was a fake f---ing Uncle Tom nigga. I felt like a trained monkey. I didn't become champ of the world to be a submissive nice guy. They wanted me to be a hero, but I wanted to be a villain."

'THEY WANTED ME TO BE A HERO, BUT I WANTED TO BE A VILLAIN.'
– MIKE TYSON

Regarding his three-year incarceration after a jury found him guilty of rape, Tyson says, "Prison doesn't rehabilitate anyone. It debilitates you. I don't care how much money you earn when you get out, you're still a lesser person than when you went in. Prison took the whole life out of me."

And there's the financial fleecing of Tyson at every level, by his women, by Don King and by others he trusted. There are people who hustled him and he still doesn't know it. The ultimate irony might be that Mike Tyson, who came from the streets, didn't have street smarts.

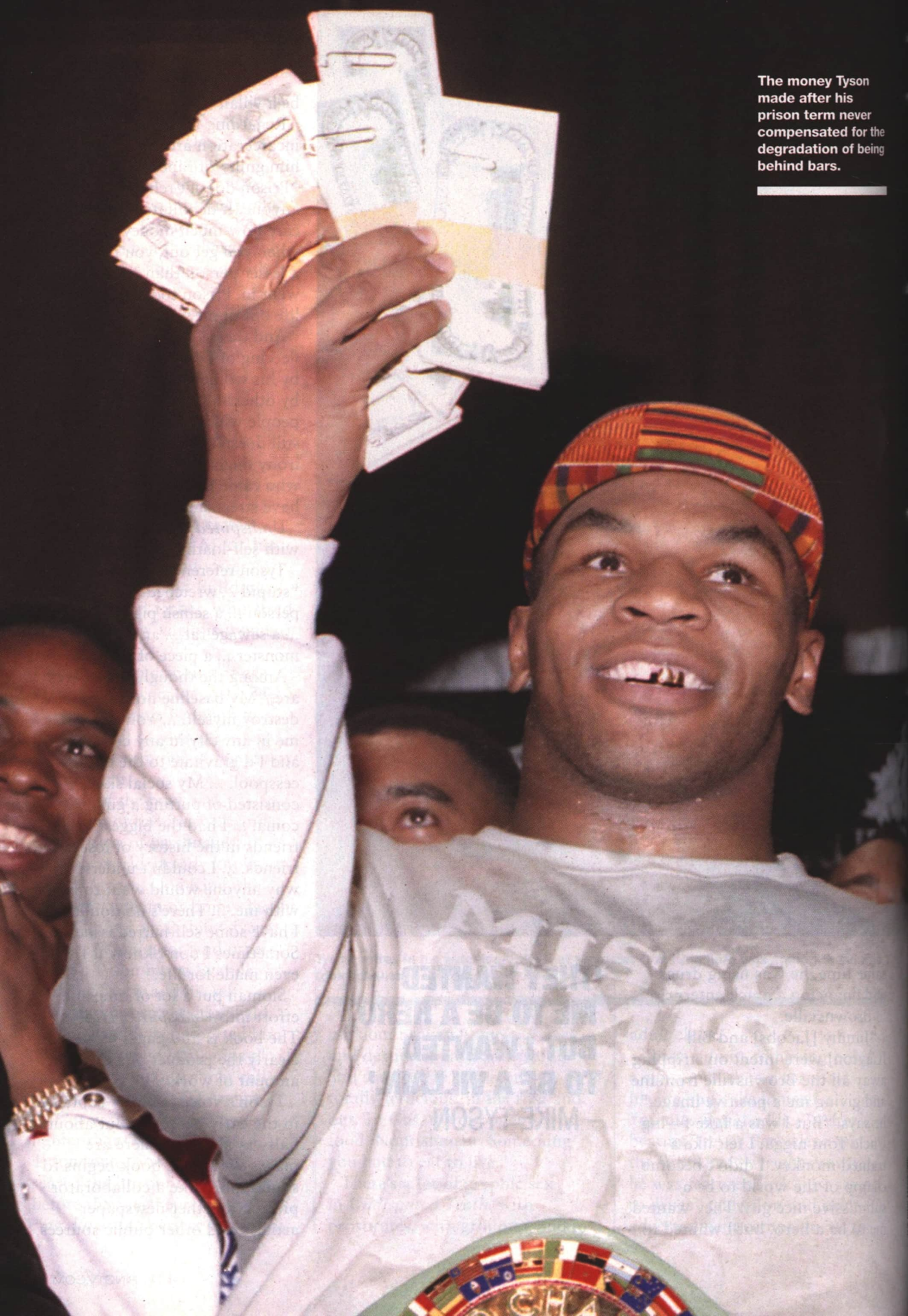
Undisputed Truth is infused with self-loathing.

Tyson references himself as "stupid ... wretched ... a miserable person ... a selfish pig ... a bum ... a sewage rat ... an ignorant monster ... a piece of s---."

Among the thoughts he shares are, "My baseline normal is to destroy myself. ... You could put me in any city in any country and I'd gravitate to the darkest cesspool. ... My social skills consisted of putting a guy in a coma. ... I had the biggest loser friends in the history of loser friends. ... I couldn't understand why anyone would want to be with me. ... There's no doubt that I have some self-hatred issues. ... Sometimes I don't know if I was even made for life."

Sloman put a lot of time and effort into *Undisputed Truth*. The book is 580 pages long and clearly the product of a huge amount of work.

Tyson's voice is nicely captured in the early chapters. But about halfway through, there are places where the book begins to sound more like a collaborator piecing together newspaper articles and other public sources



The money Tyson made after his prison term never compensated for the degradation of being behind bars.

than Tyson himself.

The narrative is remarkably compelling at times. But there are also a lot of nagging errors that fact checking should have discovered and corrected.

For example, Big Fights Inc was created and, for decades, wholly owned by Bill Cayton, who hired Jimmy Jacobs as a salaried employee. The book misstates that the company was formed by both men. HBO commentator Barry Tompkins is referred to as "Barry Watkins." Bobby Czyz did not "beat the s---" out of Holyfield before Holyfield stopped him in Round 10. In the real world, Evander was ahead in the fight when Czyz retired on his stool after five rounds.

More significantly, most of the mea culpas in *Undisputed Truth* relate to misdeeds that the world already knows about. There are some unexplored issues that Tyson doesn't deal with.

Over the years, Tyson has talked at length about having read Plato, Tolstoy, Shakespeare and others. Perhaps he should read Ovid, the Roman poet, who lived from 43 BC to 18 AD and wrote, "It is the privilege of beasts to rage about furiously. It is the duty of man to control himself."

Meanwhile, one of the saddest things about Tyson's life is that all the craziness has obscured how good a fighter he was when he was young.

Talking about "boxing gods" like Jack Johnson, Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis, Tyson declares, "I was never really one of those guys. I wish I was, but I wasn't."

He could have been.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Straight Writes and Jabs: An Inside Look* at Another Year in Boxing) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

HAND TO HAND COMBAT

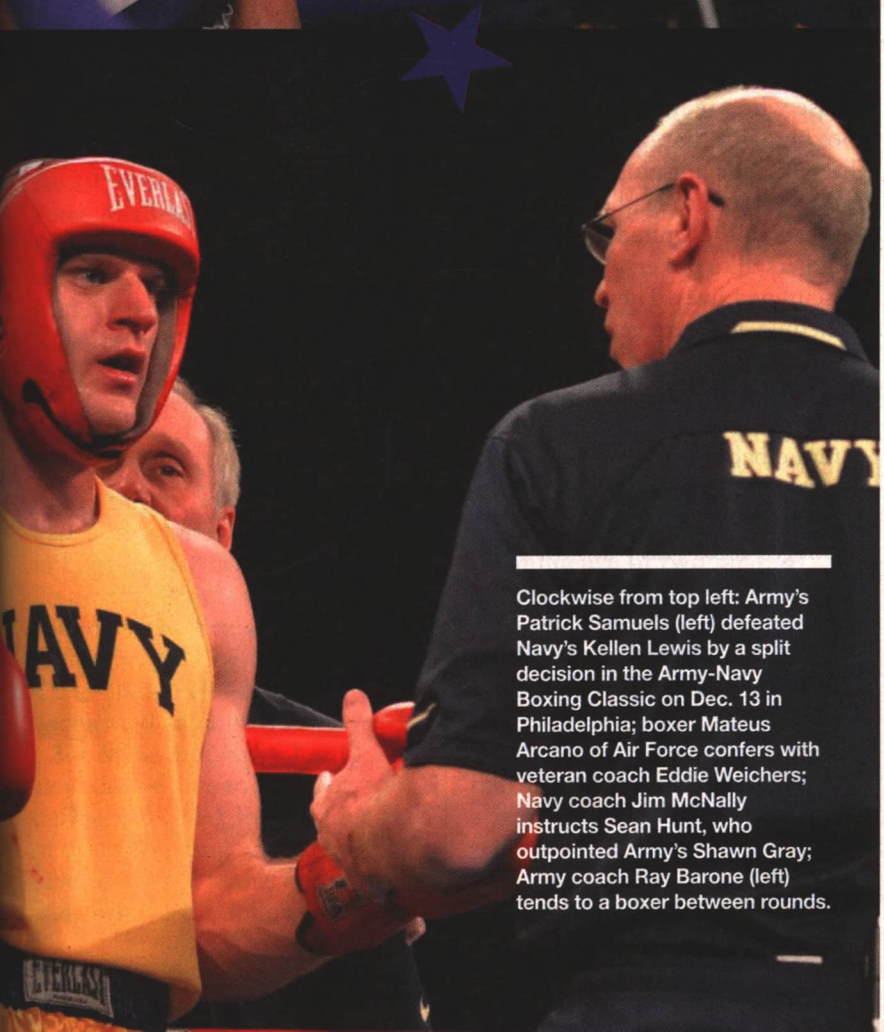
NCAA BOXING IS LONG GONE BUT THE SPORT STILL THRIVES IN THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

By **Bernard Fernandez**

Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, upon other fields and other days, will bear the fruits of victory.
— Gen. Douglas MacArthur

I have not yet begun to fight.
— John Paul Jones

Gen. MacArthur, former superintendent of the United States Military Academy and supreme commander in the Pacific theater during



Clockwise from top left: Army's Patrick Samuels (left) defeated Navy's Kellen Lewis by a split decision in the Army-Navy Boxing Classic on Dec. 13 in Philadelphia; boxer Mateus Arcano of Air Force confers with veteran coach Eddie Weichers; Navy coach Jim McNally instructs Sean Hunt, who outpointed Army's Shawn Gray; Army coach Ray Barone (left) tends to a boxer between rounds.

World War II, and Jones, the Revolutionary War hero who is widely regarded as the "father of the U.S. Navy," surely would have understood what had just taken place in the Pennsylvania Convention Center on a chilly evening in mid-December. So did a more recent shining light of the American military, Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry, a veteran of *seven* deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Boxers representing West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy had hurled themselves at one another with typical tenacity during the nine-bout Army-Navy Boxing Classic in Philadelphia. Depending upon one's point of view, Army had emerged victorious, winning four of the seven bouts televised by the CBS Sports Network, although Navy coach Jim McNally and the Middies were claiming a 5-4 team triumph on the basis of two other matches that preceded the TV fights. Much to McNally's indignation, color analyst Sean O'Grady, the former WBA lightweight champion, and West Point officials opted to count only the televised bouts.

As an enthusiastic, sellout crowd of about 1,500 spectators began to file out, a man wearing a Naval Academy hoodie approached Sgt. 1st Class Petry with a request. "Please allow me the privilege of shaking the hand of a Medal of Honor recipient," said the guy in the hoodie, who then grasped the prosthesis that occupied the space where Petry's right hand should have been. Petry's arm had been blown off below the elbow by a Taliban grenade he attempted to throw away after stepping protectively in front of two other soldiers.

It is that commitment to

duty, honor, country, as much as anything, that explains why Army, Navy and the Air Force Academy have dominated the National Collegiate Boxing Association, winning a combined 29 of 38 team titles since the NCBA was formed in 1976. Air Force, behind 38-year veteran coach Eddie Weichers, leads the way with 19 of the big trophies; Navy has won five under 28-year coach Jim McNally; and defending champion Army has claimed five – all since 2008 – under Dr. Ray Barone, a retired lieutenant colonel in his 16th year as coach of the Black Knights. West Point's boxing focus had been on its highly competitive intramural program until its entry into the NCBA in 1998.

The University of Nevada in Reno, with four, and West Chester (Pa.) University, with two, are the only other teams in the now-33 school organization, spread over three regions, with more than one title.

Unlike at other NCBA-affiliated schools, boxing – which has not been an NCAA sport since 1960 – is a mandatory class required of all male students at Army, Navy and Air Force, as well as of all female midshipmen at Navy. There is a reason for that, and it carries potential life-and-death connotations.

"The core courses here include combatives and aquatics," noted Weichers, a graduate of West Chester whose stellar career at the Air Force Academy has to date produced 316 NCBA All-Americans and 111 individual national champions. "Cadets are trained to fly, to fight and to win. We have an ethos that resounds throughout the entire academy, as well as our sister services. These young people are preparing to do things that students at 'civilian' schools are not preparing to do, and that's to lay down their lives for their country if necessary.

"The combatives and water-survival classes are necessary because of what is required to go out and lead troops in combat, and to make quick and good decisions under pressure. Boxing classes are not just designed to teach you how to box, but to help you, internally, to handle stress, fear and anxiety so that you're better able to not get yourself or your wingman killed. That's the mission and the purpose of the Air Force Academy, although Army and Navy have almost identical missions and goals. One's primarily on land, one's primarily at sea and one's primarily in the air."

Barone said that the 60 to 80 cadets who seek to refine their skills under him in any given year never lose sight of what they're there for.

"The academy certainly presents those who are more interested in boxing with that opportunity," he said. "It's a useful tool to help prepare them to lead soldiers as officers in the United States Army. Soldiers, like boxers, lead highly disciplined lives. They're on a schedule, they are very physically fit, and they train to be experts at what they do."

The service academies are unique because while they are prestigious academic institutions – the 2014 edition of *Best Colleges* rates Navy at No. 14 among American universities, while Army is 17th and Air Force 25th – there is a requisite physical component that is not nearly so prevalent on other campuses. Which is not to say that every cadet or midshipman who is required to take boxing classes is naturally suited to opening a can of whup-ass.

"It has some validity," McNally,

The defending-champion Army boxing team.

AMERICA'S BEST

The service academy boxing programs at Army, Navy and Air Force have been graced by many distinguished and accomplished Americans. Here are just a few:

ARMY

★ **Bob Neyland,** Class of 1916: West Point's heavyweight boxing champion his final three years there. He is still the winningest football coach at the University of Tennessee, where his teams posted a 173-31-12 record and 11 of his players went on to be enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame. He rose to the rank of brigadier general. ★ **Boyd Melson,** Class of 2003: The three-time NCBA All-American won the 2004 World Military Boxing Championships. Now a captain in the Army Reserve, he is a junior middleweight with a 13-1-1 record and four knockouts as a pro.

NAVY

★ **Slade Cutter,** Class of 1935: An NCAA boxing champion, he won four Navy Crosses, two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star during his illustrious naval career. ★ **Tom Lynch,** Class of 1964: He went on to become an admiral and later returned to the Naval Academy as superintendent. He also was a center on the football team who snapped the ball to Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Roger Staubach. ★ **Charles Bolden,** Class of 1968: He boxed all four years at Navy. He retired as a Marine Corps major general, flew on four Space Shuttles and is current head of the NASA space program.

AIR FORCE

★ **Arnold Bunch,** Class of 1984: Now a major general, he was 1982 Wing Open champion in the 156-pound weight class. ★ **Vince Becklund,** Class of 1990: The three-time Wing Open champ in the 185-pound weight class and NCBA titlist is currently a colonel and commanding officer of the 58th Special Operations Wing. He won a Bronze Star with three oak leaf clusters.

— Bernard Fernandez

a former NCBA semifinalist as a welterweight at Lock Haven (Pa.) University, said when asked if the Naval Academy's express purpose of developing fighting men and women produces optimal results in the ring. "But there are plenty of students here who would not be disposed to becoming good boxers, regardless of the amount of physical training they receive.

"Now, when most people think of the Army, they probably think of the infantry. Here at the Naval Academy, members of the Brigade who are most attracted to boxing tend to go into the Marine Corps or the SEALs. They have more of what you might call that 'warrior mentality.'"

Boxing has always played an integral role in the overall development of cadets and midshipmen, particularly at Army (the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., was established in 1802) and Navy (Annapolis, Md., 1845), which far predate the 1954 founding of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. When boxing was still an NCAA sport, Navy won six national championships under legendary coach Hamilton "Spike" Webb, who oversaw four U.S. Olympic boxing teams between 1920 and '32, with more than a few Navy men dotting those rosters. Boxing became a part of the curriculum at Army in 1905, under the directive of President Theodore Roosevelt, and its intercollegiate program, started in 1921 by coach Billy Cavanaugh, fielded seven undefeated squads over 28 years.

But Army and Navy hardly stood alone as national powers during a decades-long golden era of college boxing when many schools fielded teams with large and enthusiastic followings. More than 200 universities had NCAA boxing in the early 1950s, and the dynastic program at Wisconsin, which won eight team titles from 1939 through '56, was so popular that a home match against Michigan State on March 29, 1940, drew more than 15,000 fans, easily topping the 11,620 who came out that same night to watch heavyweight champion Joe Louis defend his title on a second-round stoppage of Johnny Paychek in Madison Square Garden.

But the end of NCAA boxing came in 1960, when Wisconsin middleweight Charlie Mohr was stopped in two rounds by San Jose State's Stu Bartell. Mohr was hospitalized with a massive subdural hematoma and he died eight days later. His passing gave the NCAA, which had already been wavering in its support of the sport, a reason to withdraw after that season. Subsequent studies showed that an undiagnosed aneurism, not boxing, might have caused Mohr's death, but by then the fight game's separation from the NCAA had been finalized.

From 1960 until 1976, when the NCBA came into existence, college boxing barely hung on, with a handful of schools fielding club teams coached almost exclusively by unpaid volunteers. Weichers, who went to West Chester to play football, gravitated to boxing through the influence of two men, Al McChesney and Dean Plemmons, who started the university's boxing team (the Golden Rams were NCBA team champs in 1979 and '82) and later were co-founders of the organization that has kept college boxing alive and, all things considered, reasonably healthy.

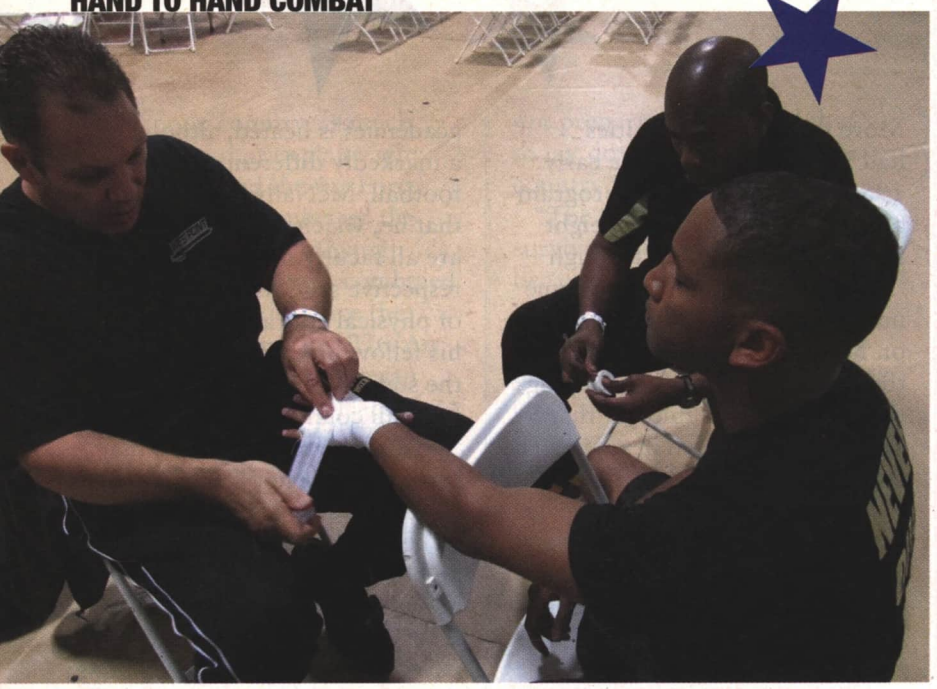
As might be expected, the competition among the service academies is heated, although at a markedly different level than football. McNally, who notes that he, Weichers and Barone are all faculty members in their respective schools' departments of physical education, said he and his fellow boxing coaches enjoy the sort of job security their football counterparts do not.

"You have to understand that boxing here is not like football or basketball," McNally said. "These kids were not recruited to be boxers. There's no recruiting allowed by the NCBA in any case. A lot of our team members had never put on a boxing glove until they got to the Naval Academy.

"For the coaches in many of our sports, and most particularly football, their job security depends on how they do against Army. It's the same at Army, maybe not so much at Air Force because most of our sports teams don't compete against Air Force. But Army and Navy are both in the Patriot League, except for football. The brass keep a running total every year of how Navy does against Army. You can lose to them once, but if you lose two, three, four in a row, you're probably looking for another job."

As proof of McNally's assertion, within days of Navy's 12th straight conquest of the Army football team, a 34-7 rout the day after the Army-Navy Boxing Classic, Army coach Rich Ellerson – 0-5 against the Midshipmen – was fired. But even in presumably lower-profile sports like boxing, the competition is nothing short of intense.

"Why is Army-Navy so big, in everything?" Barone asked, rhetorically. "Why is Michigan-Ohio State? Or Yankees-Red Sox? Army-Navy is big because, well, it just is. It's been inbred in our culture, in our values, in



Army coach Ray Barone wraps the hands of boxer Gavin Chapman as assistant coach Steve Devot looks on.

our tradition."

Weichers said that his team's matches with Army and Navy come relatively early in the boxing season, always the night before football games, thus limiting his options until he has a better feel for who his top guys are. And that's all right with him.

"If we had something like the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy [which is awarded to the top academy football team each year] in boxing like we do in football, we'd have to put our best fighters up against the best from Army and Navy too soon, before they'd probably be ready," he said. "It's not a true indicator of team strength. Sometimes we put our second- and third-line guys up against their second- and third-line guys, matching them up according to size and ability.

"We don't want to have a situation where the pressure to win these [inter-service] competitions is overwhelming. We don't want to create that monster and make those matches more important than the nationals."

The national NCBA tournament is scheduled for April 3-5 at West Point, with the host Black Knights seeking to retain their team championship and take the top prize for the sixth time in seven years.

The academies' boxing coaches are in agreement that their function is not to produce future professional boxers or even elite amateurs capable of making an Olympic team, although all branches of the service have been or at least have a chance to be thus represented. Ken Norton and Leon Spinks got their boxing starts in the Marines, two-time former IBF cruiserweight champion Steve "USS" Cunningham in the Navy and 1988 Olympic heavyweight gold medalist Ray Mercer in the Army.

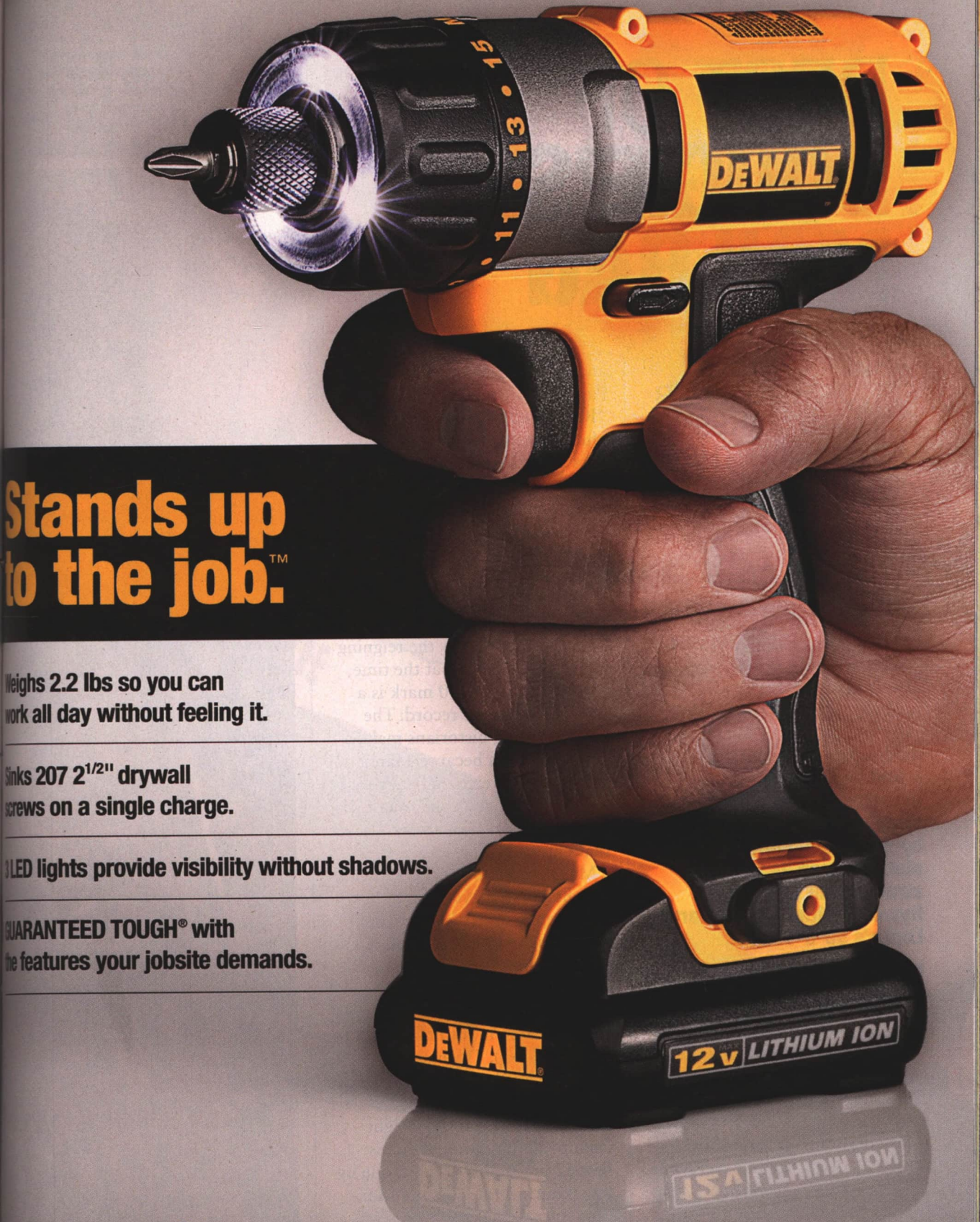
"Back then we – I mean the Army – would go to the Armed Forces Championships and win, like, 11 of the 12 individual finals," recalled Mercer, a two-time titlist. "I'm not sure people who have never been in the military understand when you talk about *esprit de corps* and all that, but it's very important to us that have been there. You want to uphold the honor of your branch of the service.

"Look, you're brothers in arms and all that good stuff every day of the year – except when you go against one another. We love each other, but it's all about winning. It's about pride. The way I look at it, boxing and the military have a lot in common. They kind of go together."

O'Grady, who did the commentary for those seven bouts at the Army-Navy Boxing Classic, knows where Mercer is coming from. He said he didn't go to Philly "expecting to see the next Floyd Mayweather, but I did expect to see guts, determination, Army strong and Navy pride. I expected to see our country's future heroes, and I did. I came away with restored faith in the youth of America."

The cost of producing those newly minted ensigns and second lieutenants is high, and getting higher. Weichers said that when he first went to the Air Force Academy in 1976, the price tag to taxpayers for educating each cadet over four years was $80,000. It's now up to $417,000, which must be multiplied by the more than 12,000 attendees spread between the three academies.

"Our country has invested so much into training these guys to be pilots or navigators or whatever," he said. "They're not here to go to the next level of boxing after college. They're here to serve in defense of the nation. If any of my guys is even thinking of the Olympics or something like that, I squash that idea pretty quick. I say, 'When you're done here, hang up the gloves and go serve your country. Oh, and I'm proud of you.'"



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BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN MAKES ITS DEBUT IN THE RING MAGAZINE

By **Doug Fischer**

JUAN VALVERDE, of Tijuana, Mexico, asked why the boxing media fixates on former heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano's 49-0 record when longer – and arguably more impressive – unbeaten streaks have been achieved by fighters in lighter weight classes, such as former strawweight and junior flyweight titleholder Ricardo Lopez's 50-0-1 mark.

DOUGIE'S reply: Marciano's mark has become a marketing tool for any modern fighter who gets close to winning 49 bouts without a loss. Fans had to hear about it when good fighters, such as the late Johnny Tapia, got close to the mark and when forgettable fighters, like Danish heavyweight Brian Nielsen, were just one bout away from surpassing it.

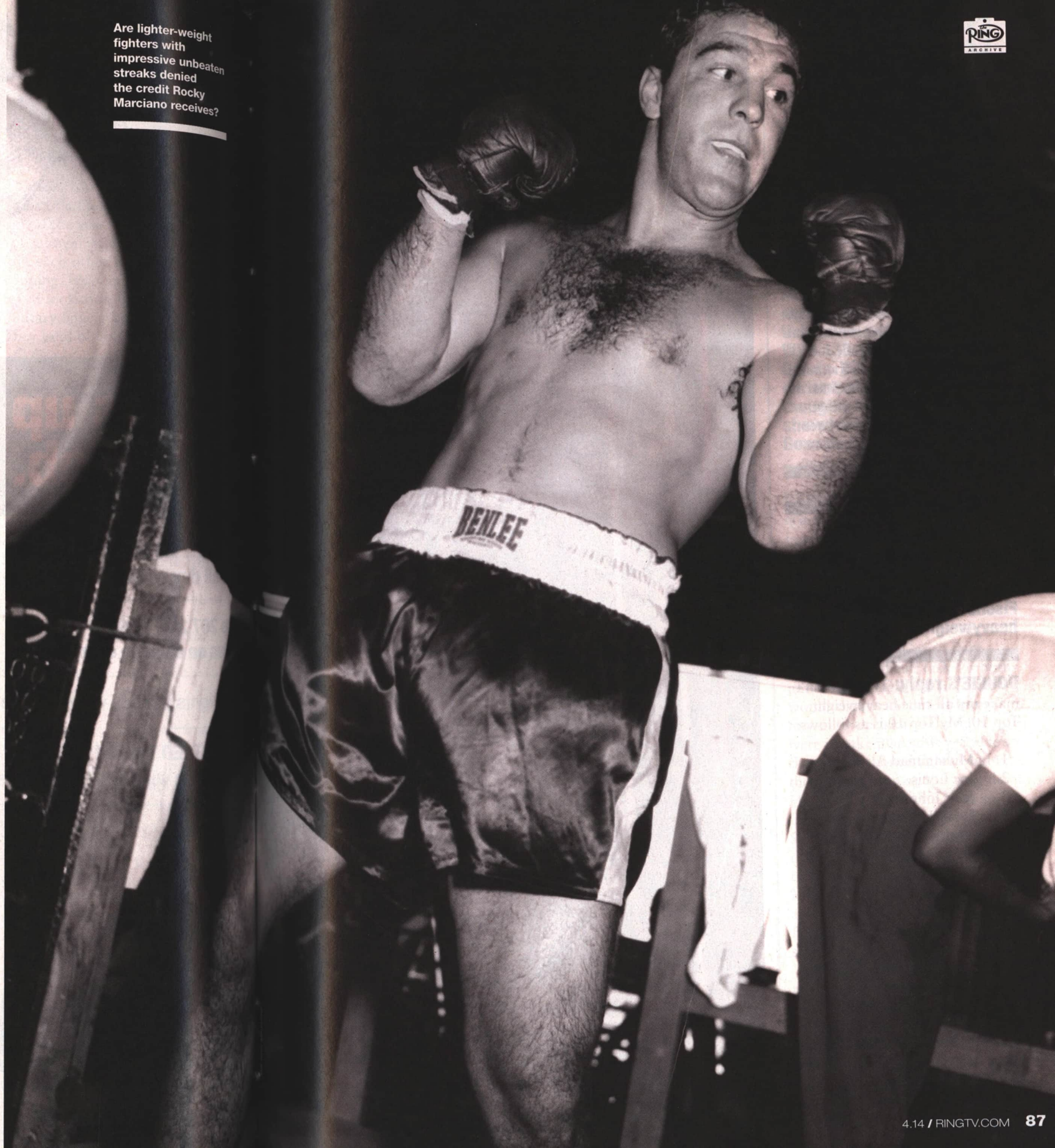
Recently Marciano's "49-0" was brought up prior to upset losses suffered by long-reigning featherweight titleholder Chris John and former lightweight beltholder Paul Spadafora. (Proving that "Rocky's curse" remains strong after so many decades.)

As far as I'm concerned, the only time Marciano's record needed to be brought up by fans or the media was when Larry Holmes was one victory away from equaling it (prior to losing a controversial decision to Michael Spinks in 1985). That's because Holmes was the reigning heavyweight champ at the time, and Marciano's 49-0 mark is a HEAVYWEIGHT record. The reason boxing historians make a big deal of it is because Marciano *retired* as the reigning heavyweight champ with that mark. It wasn't the unbeaten streak alone that garnered attention.

Many standouts of the lighter weight classes have gone unbeaten in more than 49 pro bouts, such as "Finito" Lopez, as you mentioned.

Former bantamweight and featherweight champ Eder Jofre was unbeaten in his first 50 pro bouts (47-0-3). The masterful Brazilian finished his career with an excellent 72-2-4 (50 KOs) record. Former bantamweight champ Carlos Zarate won his first 52 pro bouts – all but one by knockout! Zarate's fellow Mexican legend Ruben Olivares was unbeaten in his first 61 bouts (60-0-1, with 55 knockouts). He won the bantamweight championship in his 53rd consecutive victory.

Willie Pep won his first 62



Are lighter-weight fighters with impressive unbeaten streaks denied the credit Rocky Marciano receives?

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

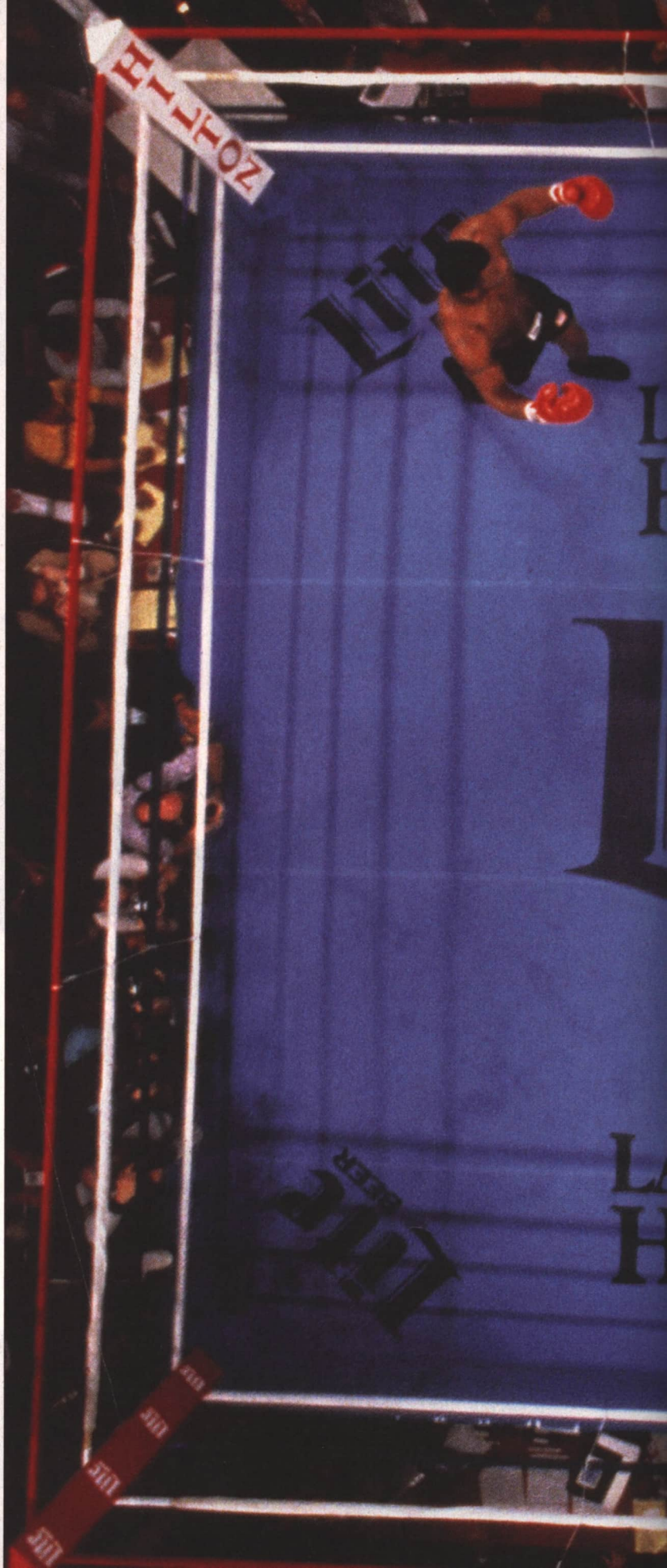
bouts, picking up the featherweight championship along the way (in his 54th bout at age 20). Former middleweight champ Nino Benvenuti won his first 65 pro bouts (and reportedly compiled a 120-0 amateur record on his way to a gold medal in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome). And, due to the quality of his opposition and his longevity, Julio Cesar Chavez's marks of 87-0 and 89-0-1 (his record prior to his first loss) are arguably more impressive than Marciano's 49-0, in my opinion.

REHAN, of London, asked where recent International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee Mike Tyson ranks among Fischer's all-time Top 10 heavyweights.

DOUGIE'S reply: Tyson doesn't make my all-time heavyweight Top 10. My Top 10 is as follows:

1. Muhammad Ali
2. Joe Louis
3. Jack Johnson
4. Larry Holmes
5. Rocky Marciano
6. George Foreman
7. Joe Walcott
8. Ezzard Charles
9. Joe Frazier
10. Evander Holyfield

That doesn't mean I think Tyson sucks. He was awesome. A lot of excellent former heavyweight champs don't make my Top 10, including Gene Tunney, Jack Dempsey, Max Baer, Sonny Liston, Ken Norton and Lennox Lewis.



Mike Tyson (pictured moments after putting Tervor Berbick down in 1986) didn't crack Doug Fischer's Top 10 heavyweights.

VINCE wanted to get Fischer's thoughts on an all-Japanese junior lightweight matchup – between WBA titleholder Takashi Uchiyama and WBC beltholder Takashi Miura – that has been talked about this year; as well as a potential RING Magazine championship match between No. 1-rated Uchiyama and No. 2-rated WBO 130-pound king Mikey Garcia. Vince was also curious about Fischer's thoughts on a flyweight showdown between Roman Gonzalez and Kazuto Ioka.

DOUGIE'S reply: Gonzalez-Ioka is a dream fight for me. I would favor "Chocolatito" by late TKO. All I know is that if the fight ever happens, the winner better get rated in the pound-for-pound Top 10 of every boxing publication and fight nerd.

The Uchiyama-Garcia fight would be a difficult task for both junior lightweight beltholders. I would slightly favor Uchiyama to win by decision if the fight were to take place this year. He's the more seasoned fighter and the more proven at 130 pounds. He won his WBA title from an unbeaten contender (Juan Carlos Salgado) and he has made eight title defenses against solid opposition (including current titleholder Miura, skilled veteran Jorge Solis and then-unbeaten contender Bryan Vasquez, all of whom he stopped).

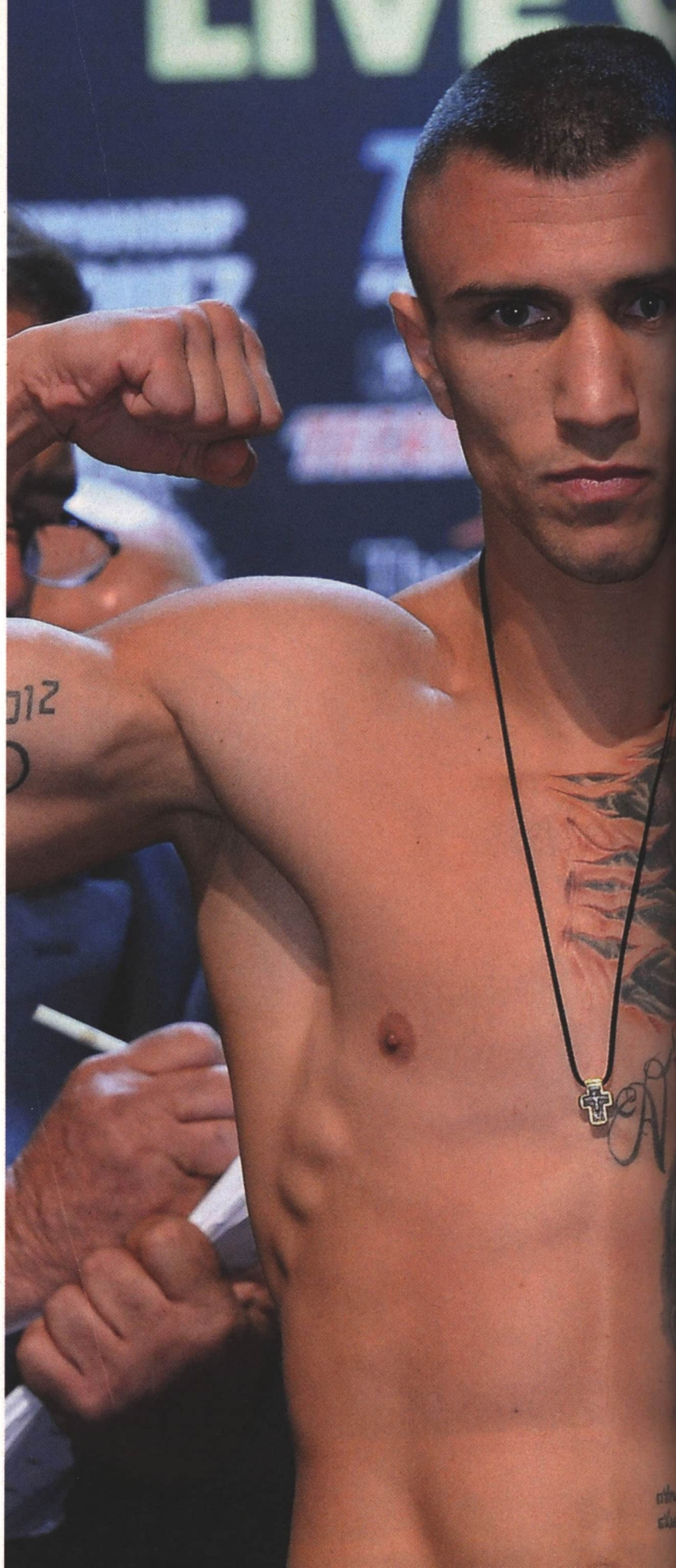
I think Uchiyama's experience, talent and style would present problems for Mikey. The unbeaten Japanese vet wouldn't play into Garcia's heavy counterpunching hands because he prefers to operate from a distance, where he's ac-

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

curate with his powerful left hand (which he can deliver from odd angles). He doesn't press his opponents. He's got a sneaky aggression from arms' length, but he's a decent body-puncher and counter-puncher when in the pocket. The last time Garcia faced a southpaw as fast, athletic and hard punching as Uchiyama was when he fought Cornelius Lock as a prospect back in 2010. Although Mikey scored an 11th-round TKO, he did not have an easy time in that fight.

Uchiyama-Miura should be an excellent rematch and 130-pound title unification bout (and I hope it happens this year). Uchiyama had to get up from the canvas to score a hard-fought eighth-round TKO in their first bout, and he'll probably have to do so again in the rematch. Miura will give any 130- or 135-pound fighter hell. That guy's got balls the size of Tokyo. His unanimous decision over Sergio Thompson last year was an overlooked Fight of the Year candidate.

ROB, of Longwood, Fla., wondered if formidable fighters from Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine – such as Sergey Kovalev, Gennady Golovkin and Vasyl Lomachenko – will one day unseat the U.S. stars who usually occupy the top of the pound-for-pound rankings and "if America's traditional boxing supremacy is bound to crumble or take a back seat to foreign beasts like the ones mentioned."



Fischer believes American boxers must get used to sharing pound-for-pound status with fighters from around the world. Vasyl Lomachenko of Ukraine (pictured) could get there one day.

DOUGIE'S reply: I don't think America's presence among elite boxers will ever "crumble," but I do believe that U.S. fighters will have to get used to sharing the pound-for-pound rankings with fighters from all around the globe, and they'll also have to be ready for stern head-to-head challenges from foreign boxers within their respective weight classes.

I wouldn't be shocked if non-American boxers occupied the pound-for-pound Top 3 – currently held by Floyd Mayweather Jr., Andre Ward and Tim Bradley – by the end of 2015.

Pound-for-pound rankings dominated by non-American boxers is nothing new. At the end of 2010, only two American boxers – No. 2 Mayweather and No. 9 Bradley – were among THE RING's Pound for Pound Top 10. Everyone else on the list – Manny Pacquiao, Sergio Martinez, Juan Manuel Marquez, Nonito Donaire, Pongsaklek Wonjongkam, Fernando Montiel, Wladimir Klitschko and Juan Manuel Lopez – was born outside of the continental U.S.

At the end of 2008, the year of Mayweather's hiatus from the sport, only ONE American was in THE RING's mythical rankings – No. 4 Bernard Hopkins, who was behind Pacquiao, Marquez and Joe Calzaghe. All of the other pound-for-pound fighters at that time were either born in Mexico or Puerto Rico.

Right now we've got a bunch of talented and determined fighters from South America, Cuba, Eastern Europe and Central Asia who are in the elite mix.

These areas of the world have always produced talented fighters, but we're seeing more of them in the rankings for two reasons: 1. Many – especially the amateur standouts, such as Guillermo Rigondeaux, Erislandy Lara and Golovkin – have come to the U.S. and have improved upon their professional styles by hooking up with noted American trainers. And 2. More are fighting on U.S. television, thereby becoming better known to the boxing media and fans who compile pound-for-pound lists.

I could be wrong, but I don't think my man "GGG" would be cracking the mythical rankings if he wasn't fighting on HBO and in the U.S. If Golovkin were fighting the same level of opposition in Germany, off HBO, I think he'd still be under the radar, like my little brother from another mother, Roman Gonzalez.

Trust me, if HBO or Showtime featured "Chocolatito" against a top-rated flyweight, you would suddenly see his name pop up on a lot of people's P4P lists.

Anyway, don't count American fighters out. Ward is poised to take over Mayweather's No. 1 spot whenever Floyd finally walks away from the sport, and there isn't anyone out there who I would make a solid favorite to beat the Bay Area boxing master. And there are some young guns out there, such as Danny Garcia, who look ready to break into the mythical rankings soon.

However, as good as he is, Ward is just one boxer – and a single punch from Golovkin, Adonis Stevenson or Kovalev could end his decade-long unbeaten streak. And though Garcia always finds a way to win, I'm not sure I'd pick him to beat Ruslan Provodnikov.

Just 20 years ago it was inconceivable that anyone but Americans could dominate the heavyweight division. European heavyweights were the biggest jokes in boxing. Now American heavyweights are the joke. Things change.

A LIFE TRANSFORMED

NEW IBF BANTAMWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER STUART HALL CREDITS BOXING FOR SAVING HIM FROM HIS SELF-DESTRUCTIVE LIFESTYLE

By **Gareth A Davies**

There is a triumph to the tale of Stuey Hall. His victory over Vusi Malinga to claim the IBF bantamweight crown late last year had a resonance which is being felt both in his community and in the wider area of the North West of England. A testament to a life transformed by the decision to make a difference, to himself and others, through the discipline of boxing.

His was once a life fueled by binging in the clubbing island of Ibiza, in the Balearic Islands off Spain. Cheap rent, cheap booze, cheap thrills.

"I come from a dead rough estate, Skerne Park, in Darlington. I'm from there. I got in with the wrong crowd. I went down the wrong path, doing the wrong things," he said.

He's 34 now. But the road to ruin was in front of him just a few years ago. "Ibiza was brilliant. ... I enjoyed every minute of Ibiza. I wouldn't lie about it," he said. "But after five years in Ibiza I was just killing myself, and obviously when I got back from Ibiza, I was still doing things wrong: drinking alcohol every day, eating bad food ..."

What makes a man plumb the depths, with no hope, no horizon?

"It all goes back to when I was at junior school and comprehensive school," he said. "I was a [jerk]. I was a bit of a bully. Honest to God, I was not a very nice person. When I was in my teens I used to enjoy going out with the lads and just ... well ... practically spoiling other peoples' nights out.

"When I look back I just cringe at that, and the way I was. I couldn't be any different to the person I am now."

At his worst, Hall had reached 154 pounds in weight and was drinking eight cans of lager in the morning. He was in a cycle of despair and despondency.

Then one day he realized he was wasting his life. "I had spots all over my face, and I thought 'I'm sick of this life now,'" he said. "I think that was the turning point. I went back down to the gym, and I trained, and I got a bit of weight off. I just started feeling good again."

Years earlier, he had dabbled with amateur boxing. It was "a chore," he said, but "it kept me off the streets."

"I stuck at it in those days," he said. "I got to an [England] Amateur Boxing Association final, and I knew back then that if I really stuck at it, I could get somewhere."

Hall was 28 when he joined the pro ranks. "It was late but I didn't feel like that," he said. "I just thought, I don't want to be one of these men who used to box, who'd end up saying, 'I could have done that. ... I could

U.K. TOP 10

1. CARL FROCH
2. AMIR KHAN
3. KELL BROOK
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. RICKY BURNS
6. GEORGE GROVES
7. TYSON FURY
8. SCOTT QUIGG
9. MARTIN MURRAY
10. NATHAN CLEVERLY

Five more (in alphabetical order): Paul Butler, James DeGale, Stuart Hall, Matthew Macklin and Billy Joe Saunders.

Through fights of Jan. 19

IBF bantamweight titleholder Stuart Hall looks the part of a new man.

have been a contender.' I didn't want to be one of those men in a pub saying that.

"Those bad days are in the past, and when I think about it, I've totally changed my life around, and really everyone in my town now praises me."

He went on: "'It's crazy how someone can go from that to what you are now.' That's what people say to me in the street. I'm so thankful to boxing, I'm so grateful to the sport.

"You get world champions that are big-headed. They're not really thankful for the sport; they're just using it. I couldn't be any happier. If I had to retire now, I'd be a very, very happy person. I'm so over the moon with what I've done."

That night against Malinga, in Leeds, punches just bounced off Hall, a man possessed, and in control of all his faculties. He simply refused to be denied.

Offers have come flooding in for Hall to visit schools in his area, to talk to the children, to tell his story. "I'm looking forward to doing it, and if I can help anyone, that'd be brilliant."

We talked a little while about the boxing movies *Fat City*, and *On the Waterfront*. "I think I will end up writing a book about my life one day. I've come such a long way," he said.

"I'm world champion now, and it's the biggest thing you can get in boxing. I've won the British title, and now I need to start thinking of my family. I've got a business head on me if I can get a few quid in the bank, I know I can turn it around. I would love to get a little run-down property and do it up and sell it."

"I'd love to do that after boxing, I'd love to get into property development. I'm a positive thinker. I used to be a roofer. But I really did used to enjoy it; I didn't mind the cold."

Hall is looking to fight again at the end of March. "I want to fight in the North East, in the Newcastle area, so fingers crossed we can get that sorted and get a voluntary defense, which would be fantastic."

After that, he'd like to face Jamie McDonnell again. McDonnell won the IBF title in May of last year but was stripped. Hall lost to McDonnell in a title fight – British, European and Commonwealth – on points in 2011. It was close, too.

"I've always wanted that fight," Hall said. "He's the one that didn't want it. He won the world title. That's the fight I want. I want to put things straight, win a voluntary, fight McDonnell, and then probably retire – happy as Larry."

LARRY HOLMES ON ANTHONY JOSHUA

★ Larry Holmes, the former heavyweight world champion and one of boxing's legends, is in regular contact with fledgling British professional Anthony Joshua, advising him to work hard and not rush his career.

The American, who held the world title between 1978 and 1985, is convinced the 24-year-old "can become the champ of the world."

Holmes watched Joshua at the Olympic Games in London, where the huge athlete impressed him in winning the super heavyweight gold. Joshua impressed the ex-champ again with his third pro fight.

Holmes, 64, is not so impressed with the overall state of the division, however.

"I'm not happy with what I see. That's why I told Anthony Joshua that he could be heavyweight champion of the world," said Holmes, who made 20 consecutive defenses of the world title, second only to Joe Louis' 25. "Matter of fact I texted him the other day, told him to work hard, and don't kill himself to get there too quickly. He can be the champion of the world. I did not say that to make him feel good. He has all the physical qualities. It's true. He can be the champ."

Holmes warned about burnout if Joshua fights too often. "Let his body heal, let his mind heal," he said. "There are a lot of fighters that get hurt because they fight and then have another fight and never get a chance to rest. I would say preserve all of that like I did. I had 38 years of boxing when I finished boxing.

"I didn't rush back into another fight, I waited two or three months before I got into another fight. This is what you've got to do, let that body heal and let that mind heal and don't take any shots to the side of the head.

"He's got to take his time and learn it hard and real. The guy's got all the potential, and there's nobody out there."

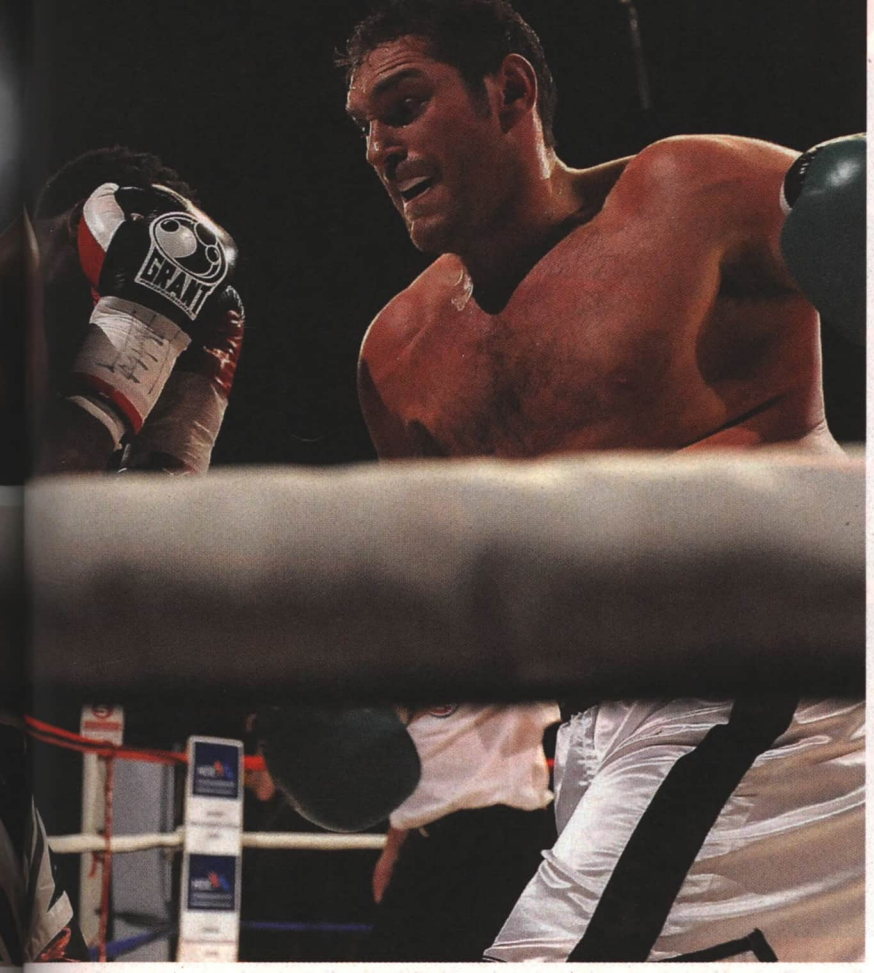
FURY-CHISORA II?

★ Frank Warren hopes he can match European heavyweight champion Dereck Chisora and Tyson Fury in a rematch this summer.

Warren insisted he had signed a "lengthy deal" with Fury for him to fight on the BoxNation channel, with the Fury-Chisora matchup potentially a title eliminator for the WBO world crown.

However, Mick Hennessy, Fury's current promoter, said that the deal, which he claimed would be "for three fights," was yet to be inked.

"I've been promoting a long time, and this is a huge fight. This is a stadium fight," Warren said. "But neither of them can afford to lose before then. Great



Dereck Chisora and Tyson Fury, pictured in their first meeting, could fight again this summer.

plans can easily be upset."

Fury defeated Chisora on points in July 2011 to take his British and Commonwealth belts and his perfect record. That said, Chisora was overweight for that fight. He has transformed himself both mentally and physically since then.

GROVES-FROCH

★ George Groves has expressed his frustration at what he sees as Carl Froch's refusal to take a rematch with him after their contest last November, which the younger man believes was prematurely stopped in the ninth round.

"I've spoke with Froch's promoter, I've put offers back to them," Groves told me. "... I'm just waiting on Carl Froch. He's used every excuse so far to try and talk his way out of a rematch with me, and he's said he needs some time over Christmas to not think about boxing."

Groves believes Froch is stalling. "In the meantime, he says he doesn't want to give me a payday," Groves said. "So it's a strange situation. He's running out of excuses very quickly."

Then Groves went further. "He has zero options. There are no fights out there for him apart from a rematch with me, because he's not going to get any public backing if he fights anyone else, and he isn't going to get any television network backing either, so the fight that everyone wants is the rematch."

Groves insisted that the money is not an issue for him. "You can tell from the amount of money I've agreed to take from this – which is nowhere near the amount I should demand – that it's the fight I want, not the money," he said.

"I want to be world champion, and commercially it's a huge fight. It's a pay-per-view fight in the U.K., and could be one of the biggest of all time. I'm just waiting for a short while, because his hand will need to be forced, because he's gone silent. Not a peep out of him."

In the meantime, Groves says he has also had offers from America. He has spoken with Golden Boy Promotions, Al Haymon and Lou DiBella.

"I've been offered a few shots at various different titles in America," he said. "I'm realistic, though. I know I'm a pay-per-view fighter, but only in the right fights."

It appears that the IBF has forced Froch's hand. The sanctioning body announced shortly before our deadline that Froch must give Groves a rematch within 90 days or be stripped of his belt, which is the news Groves wanted to hear.

That didn't necessarily mean the fight was on, though. Froch had the option of giving up his title and facing Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. in a lucrative bout in the U.S. Representatives of Froch and Chavez had been in talks.

DARREN BARKER

★ Finally, as suggested in last month's Letters From Europe column, it looked as if Darren Barker would retire after his defeat to Felix Sturm. Nothing to do with his heart, or desire. Just his body. And in particular his hips. Respect to a great servant of British boxing. Cheers.

Gareth A Davies is Boxing Correspondent for *The Telegraph*, London.

Oscar De La Hoya knows how much a shot to the liver hurts, courtesy of Bernard Hopkins.

CHOPPED LIVER

BOXERS WILL TELL YOU THAT A PERFECTLY TARGETED SHOT TO THIS VITAL ORGAN CAN BE DEBILITATING

By **Scott LaFee**

In boxing, no punch is more dramatic or crowd-pleasing than a body-dropping blow to the head – a concussive impact so devastating that it renders the recipient suddenly senseless and soon supine – the classic knockout.

But while head shots probably top the list of popular pugilistic punches, they are not the only means to vanquish an opponent with a single, connecting swing of the fist. A hard punch to the liver can be just as effective and equally dramatic.

With the exception of your heart, one could argue that no organ below your neck is more important to your general physical well-being than your liver. Located in the upper right-hand portion of the abdominal cavity, beneath the diaphragm and atop the stomach, right kidney and intestines, the liver is the largest internal and most metabolically complex organ in your body.

It performs more than 500 different functions, from manufacturing proteins and hormones to controlling blood sugar levels to neutralizing toxins and fighting off infections. At any moment, roughly 10 percent of the blood in your body is passing through your liver, which pumps it out at a rate of 1½ quarts per minute.

So important is the liver that it is the only human organ capable of regenerating itself.

Over the course of evolution, its workload increasing, the human liver has grown in size. One consequence is that it is now more vulnerable to injury. Boxing rules prohibit punches to the kidneys, which serve as critical blood filters, but the kidneys are located at the rear of the abdominal cavity and protected by the ribs and thick sheathes of stomach and back muscle. The liver, conversely, pokes out from below the rib

cage – a dangling, 3-pound-plus blob of soft tissue easily exposed to an accurately aimed left to that part of the body.

An effective liver shot can end a fight almost as quickly as a similar blow to the head. The latter can disrupt cognitive processes, but doesn't necessarily hurt (at that moment at least) and it may take some time before the brain and the boxer figure out they've been damaged.

The effects of a hard shot to the liver are more quickly felt. First, there is almost immediate, perhaps overwhelming pain. Fighters describe the sensation as akin to having the wind knocked out of them.

But that's not the worst of it.

The human liver is extremely well-innervated, richly woven and encapsulated with nerves necessary to performing its known functions, which include monitoring and helping regulate blood temperature, pressure, nutrient content and general homeostasis or internal equilibrium. This includes connections with the vagus nerve, a primary pathway for transmitting sensory information from the viscera (internal organs) to the brain.

A punch to the liver triggers a cascade of potentially calamitous consequences. The blow itself distorts the organ, compressing it on one side, distending it on the other. Beyond any physical tissue damage, the resulting dynamic change in pressure initiates an abnormal and alarming sequence of nerve signals: The liver tells blood vessels throughout the body – but not the brain – to dilate or widen while at the same time ordering the heart rate to slow down.

Ordinarily, if blood vessels dilate, which they might do to deliver more blood to needy muscles, the heart rate increases to compensate and maintain a constant blood pressure. When the first happens but not the second, the brain interprets the effect as a threatening decrease in its own blood supply. It responds by constricting blood vessels within itself, further reducing blood flow.

Loss of consciousness is a potential result, but more often boxers report a loss of focus and drive. Legs get wobbly and unresponsive. Not just their wind, but their will to win, has been knocked out of them.

To be sure, this kind of devastating liver shot is not common. Good boxers are well-versed in how to avoid leaving the organ open to injury. They keep their arms and elbows in, protectively, and roll with punches, transferring most of the impact to the back.

But the liver shot remains an occasionally annihilative weapon.

Middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins beat Oscar De La Hoya in a 2009 title fight after landing a powerful punch to De La Hoya's ribs and liver, followed by a blow to the back of his head. De la Hoya grimaced, collapsed and was counted out.

And it was a second round shot to Leonard Dorrin's liver by Arturo Gatti in a 2004 bout that immediately dropped the former – his first pro loss and final fight.

"Kill the body and the head will follow" is an old trainer's credo. There are many ways to do this, from punches to the solar plexus – the pit of the stomach and home to its own set of radiating nerves – to repeated pounding of the ribs.

But a liver shot may be the quickest way to get a head to follow.

JULIAN WILLIAMS

By **Mike Coppinger**

THE ESSENTIALS
Age: 23
Weight class: Junior middleweight
Height: 5 feet 10 inches
Stance: Orthodox
Hometown: Philadelphia
Record: 14-0 (8 KOs)
Biggest strengths: Has a good chin ★ is a versatile boxer ★ is an excellent counterpuncher
Biggest question marks: Sometimes too willing to trade punches ★ has a history of hand injuries ★ gets impatient

No one would have blamed Julian Williams if he pulled out of his fight with Hugo Centeno on Sept. 12. But there he was on the day his mother died – a week after he signed the contract for the bout — at his trainer Stephen Edwards' home.

Williams asked Edwards whether he should do his roadwork before or after he went to the funeral home for a viewing. Naturally, Edwards told him to take the day off and suggested he might skip the bout under the circumstances.

Julian wanted to fight.

At 5 a.m. the next day, Williams was at the track and back to work, running with tears in his eyes. Edwards was confident then that Williams would perform well even with a heavy heart.

Williams didn't emerge victorious, as the Sept. 2013 fight was stopped on cuts – the result of an accidental head butt — before it became official, but he was leading on all three cards and seemed well on his way to the biggest win of his career.

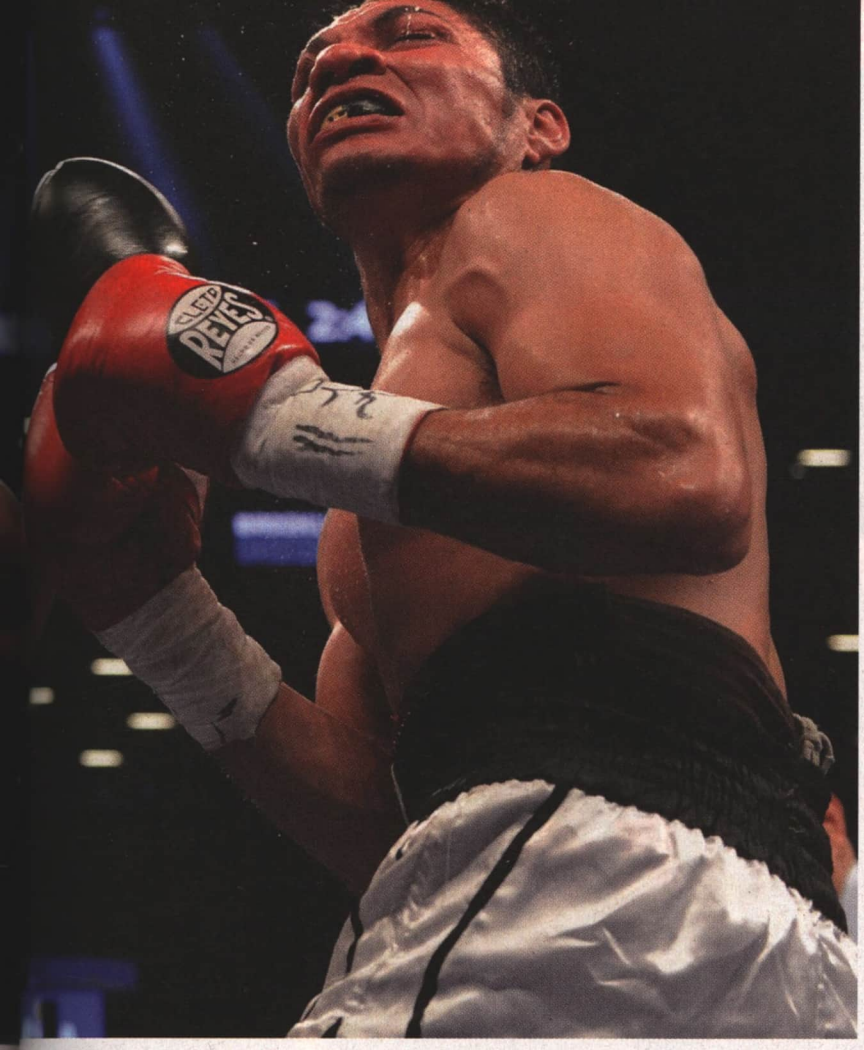
In the process, he's established himself as one of the top prospects in a junior middleweight division loaded with promising fighters.

"It was extremely frustrating because I put so much into that fight," said Williams, who is managed by Al Haymon. " ... I trained for that fight planning funerals and just mourning my mother's death, and it was just a rough time for me and family, but I still decided to go through with the fight. ... Man, I could have ripped that kid's head off in there that night. I was just extremely mad."

"J Rock" sandwiched the Centeno bout between quality wins over veterans Joachim Alcine and Orlando Lora. Williams dropped Alcine three times en route to a one-sided eight-round decision. In December, he stopped Lora in Round 3.

Williams has yet to go the 10-round distance, but he's an advanced prospect and is on the cusp of making the leap. Edwards believes Williams will graduate to contender status after a respected veteran accepts a fight with his charge, which he believes could come in late 2014 or 2015. The plan is for Williams to fight six times in 2014 and enter 2015 with a 20-0 record.

"I think what's going to make him one of the guys to look at is people will notice he can win the fight a lot of different ways," said Edwards, who has trained Williams at James Shuler's Memorial Gym in Philadelphia for four-plus years. "He can outbox guys, he can fight on the inside, he can fight on the outside. He can get into a firefight. He



Julian Williams (left, against Orlando Lora) has demonstrated the work ethic trainers love.

understands that it's professional fighting so he has to be exciting and win at the same time."

Williams grew up in West Philly in a single-parent home with two brothers and one sister. His father came into his life at age 12, and he has since forged a deep bond with his dad.

He's also close with Edwards, whom he met at the trainer's fight party to watch the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Ricky Hatton fight in 2007. They live about 10 minutes from one another, which makes training and watching countless hours of fight footage a bit easier. And the pair is Philadelphia to the core.

"You got so many great fighters that come from Philadelphia, especially around the middleweight division," Williams said. "Bernard Hopkins, Benny Briscoe, [Eugene] Cyclone Hart, Bobby 'Boogaloo' Watts. Those guys were great Philadelphia fighters.

"It just makes me want to go the extra mile because you go into a fight in Philadelphia, there's a certain assumption that you gotta fight with determination, you gotta fight with a lot of heart. I just wanna keep this thing going and add on, so when they mention those guys' names, they'll mention my name."

Williams has already proven he has the determination and heart. That ability to overcome adversity will serve him well in his quest to etch his name in Philadelphia boxing history. RING

3 MORE TO WATCH

ARTUR BETERBIEV
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT (4-0, 4 KOS)

The 28-year-old Russian-Canadian is a devastating puncher with a deep amateur background. He represented Russia at the last two Olympic Games and won the 2009 World Amateur Boxing Championships. He's trained by Marc Ramsay and Russ Anber.

CHRIS EUBANK JR.
MIDDLEWEIGHT (12-0, 7 KOS)

The son of a British boxing legend, Eubank Jr. has impressed in his short time fighting as a pro. The 24-year-old followed in his father's footsteps by training in New York an amateur. He split from promoter Mick Hennessy in late 2013 and is trained by Ronnie Davis Sr., who guided his dad.

OSCAR VALDEZ
FEATHERWEIGHT (8-0, 8 KOS)

Valdez represented Mexico at the Olympics in 2008 and 2012 before turning pro under the guidance of Frank Espinoza. He's promoted by Top Rank and is one of the brightest young prospects in the sport.

Jelena Mrdjenovich (left, against Franchesca Alcanter) doesn't brag about her power. Others do it for her.

TURNING HEADS

JELENA MRDJENOVICH, 31, CONTINUES TO IMPRESS WITH MEMORABLE KNOCKOUTS

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

It takes a lot to get a Hall of Famer to turn his head, but Jeff Fenech was impressed by Jelena Mrdjenovich when the two met up at the WBC convention in Thailand last November.

"Somehow I conned him into working pads for me because I was getting ready for a fight on Dec. 6," said a smiling Mrdjenovich, the current WBC featherweight champion. "He said, 'You know, you actually hit

hard; not just for a girl, but for a guy your weight, too.'"

And Fenech didn't stop there. Once Mrdjenovich showed Fenech the ending of her 2011 win over Olivia Gerula, a knockout that landed in the No. 4 spot on THE RING's recent list of the greatest KOs in women's boxing history, he made it a point to let everyone know about his new "discovery."

"He proceeded to show everybody at the conference," Mrdjenovich said. "I actually got a message from one of his friends that Jeff was at dinner with two other former world champions, and he was showing the video. He said, 'I don't know how many times he's shown that knockout.'"

Mrdjenovich laughs about it, but it's also a source of pride for the soft-spoken Canadian, who obviously carries a big stick in the ring, with 16 of her 31 wins coming by knockout. That figure isn't Tyson-esque but is impressive because you generally don't see knockouts in women's boxing the way Mrdjenovich consistently puts them together.

"People do think with women it's just a powder puff type thing," said the Edmonton product, who is the only fighter with two entries on the aforementioned greatest KOs list. And while she appreciates the fact her KOs of Gerula (which has garnered over 230,000 views when you count up all the different versions on YouTube) and Franchesca Alcanter in 2005 made the cut, she insists her knockout of Alcanter in their 2006 rematch (which wasn't recorded on video) was even more spectacular.

That's scary, especially from a fighter as modest about her power as Mrdjenovich.

"Sometimes I swear I barely hit them," she said. "But then you're like, 'maybe I do kind of hit hard sometimes.' I'm not the typical boxer with all this bravado, though. I do this because I love it, and I'm fortunate that I happen to be good at it."

Now in her 11th year as a pro, Mrdjenovich, 31, has picked up titles at 126, 130, and 135 pounds over the course of her career, with notable wins over Layla McCarter, Mia St. John and Belinda Laracuente.

Many wrote her off as a top-level fighter after she lost five of six bouts from 2009 to 2011. But she found her mojo once more, winning seven of her last eight bouts. Most impressive in this stretch was her first win in three tries against Melissa Hernandez, a thrilling six-round technical decision in THE RING's female Fight of the Year for 2013.

It was one of Mrdjenovich's 29 bouts at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, where she packs the house for fights that are also broadcast on the Sportsnet channel in Canada. Clearly, she is as legitimate as one of the boys when it comes to her popularity, an emphatic statement to those who say female fighters can't sell tickets.

"They like entertaining fighters," Mrdjenovich said of Canadian fans. "It's almost like they like the Mexican style of fighters: They get in there, they get dirty, they get the job done, and it's action packed. Given my stats, I'd probably be a better boxer than a fighter, but I get bored during fights, so I get into wars. I get into huge fights with my coach in the corner. (Laughs.) But I love those fights. I'm a fan as well as a fighter, so I think the reason I've been so successful here is because I put it all out in the ring. I don't leave anything back and I fight to the finish."

A host of Mrdjenovich's knockout victims will certainly attest to that fact. As will Jeff Fenech. RING

POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS, Norway
23-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. ANNE SOPHIE MATHIS, France
27-3 (23 KOs)
Junior middleweight

3. JELENA MRDJENOVICH, Canada
31-9-1 (16 KOS)
Featherweight

4. AVA KNIGHT, U.S.
12-2-3 (5 KOs)
Junior flyweight

5. YESICA YOLANDA BOPP, Argentina
26-1 (12 KOs),
Junior flyweight

6. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS, Argentina
18-0 (9 KOs)
Lightweight

7. JESSICA CHAVEZ, Mexico
19-3-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

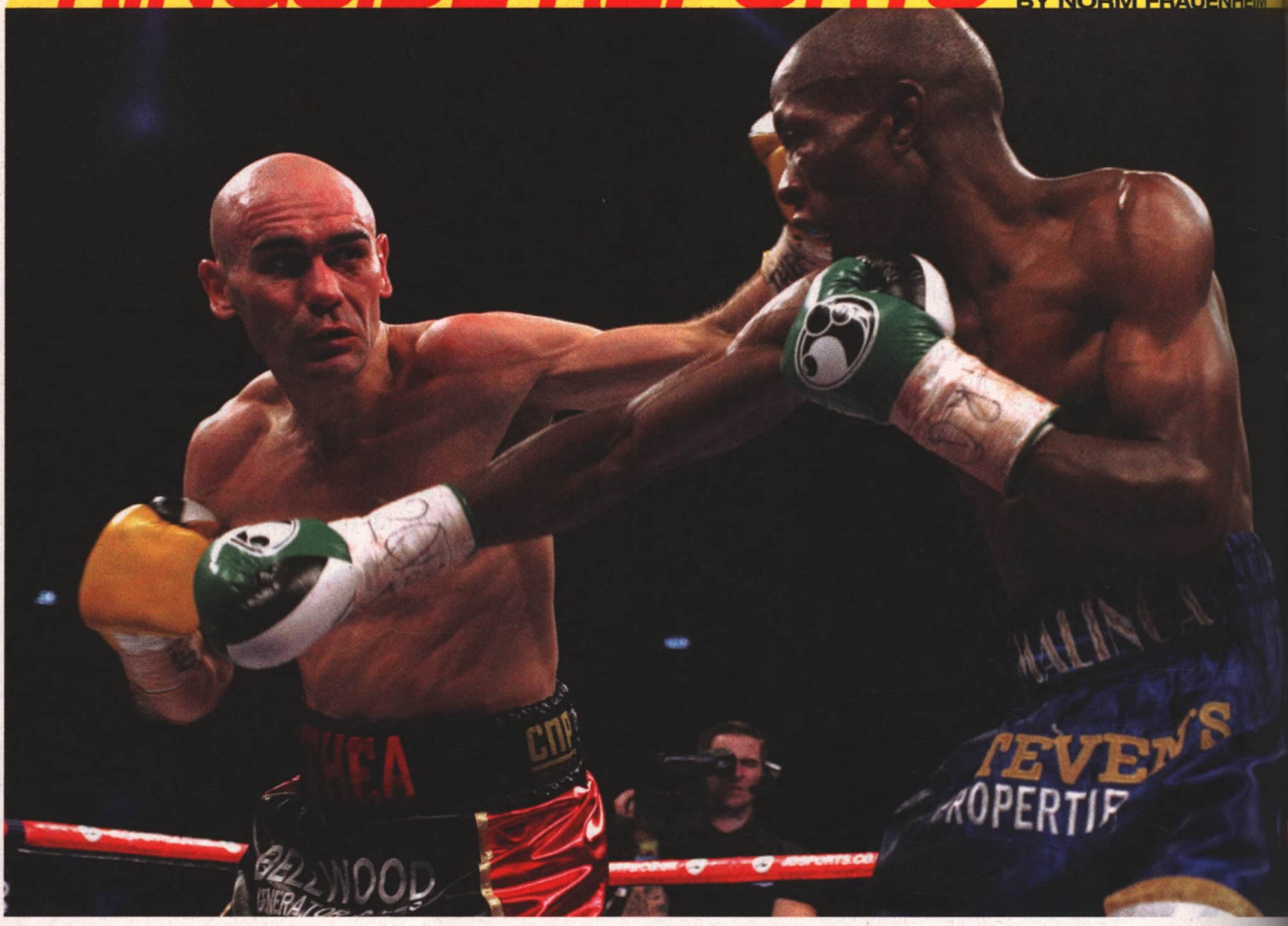
8. MELISSA HERNANDEZ, U.S.
18-5-3 (6 KOs)
Featherweight

9. DIANA PRAZAK, Australia
12-2 (8 KOs)
Junior lightweight

10. MARCELA ELIANA ACUNA, Argentina
40-6-1 (17 KOs)
Junior featherweight

Through fights of Jan. 19

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



Stuart Hall (firing a left at Vusi Malinga) is one of the more unlikely world titleholders.

STUART HALL
UD 12
VUSI MALINGA

Date: Dec. 21
Site: First Direct Arena, Leeds, England
Division: Bantamweight
Weights: Hall 117.25 pounds; Malinga 117.5
RING rating (going into the fight): Neither fighter rated
Network: Box Nation, LiveSport

★ Last call produces more hangovers than titles. For nearly five years, Stuart Hall was there for a late round in one long bout against alcohol and drugs with no reasonable expectation of ever answering another opening bell. Waking up at all was tough enough.

But Hall did.

"I just looked at myself in the mirror and said: 'I can't keep doing this, I'll end up dead,'" Hall told U.K. media. "I was drinking and taking drugs every single day and eating the wrong foods. I was on the road to nowhere."

Somewhere was a return from nearly five years on the Spanish isle of Ibiza, a Euro party zone where roadwork is a pub crawl. After long nights and wasted days on an island surrounded by the Mediterranean and awash in booze, Hall returned in late 2004 to England and eventually the ring. He was 28 and looked to be several pints beyond his prime. He had boxed as an amateur. The gym beckoned.

Within the ropes, there was a chance at rehab. Before long, it turned into a career and an improbable bantamweight title in an upset of South African Vusi Malinga for the International Boxing Federation's version of the 118-pound crown.

Hall (16-2-1, 7KOs) entered the bout an unlikely contender. He was 33. He had lost to ex-IBF champion Jamie McDonnell in a 2011 bid for a U.K. title. He also lost in 2012 to fellow Brit Lee Haskins. Hall appeared to be a very good story, but a local one. For the favored Malinga, the fight was an opportunity to regain some world-class credibility after a loss to Leo Santa Cruz last year.

But everything about Hall has been unlikely. He's fooled the odds. Knocked out the assumptions. He swarmed Malinga (21-5-1, 12 KOs), rocking him in the second and flooring him in the third with a right en route to a 117-110, 117-110 and 116-111 victory on the scorecards. Hall, who had former cruiserweight champ Glenn McCrory in his corner, seized the momentum.

But Malinga, a nephew of ex-super middleweight champ Sugar Boy Malinga, rallied in the middle rounds, including a stinging right that produced a nasty welt below Hall's left eye. By the ninth, swelling began to close the wounded eye. But Hall's focus on the immediate task remained clear.

"I couldn't see anything out of my left eye for the final few rounds, but I kept my focus, and I always knew I was in front," he told ringside reporters.

And beyond a losing lifestyle.•

JEAN PASCAL
UD 12
LUCIAN BUTE

Date: Jan. 18
Site: Bell Centre, Montreal
Division: Light heavyweight
Weights: Pascal 175 pounds; Bute 173.6
RING rating (going into the fight): Pascal No. 10; Bute No. 3 at super middleweight
Network: HBO

Jean Pascal promised the Super Bowl of Canadian boxing. It wasn't. It wasn't even the Stanley Cup of Canadian Boxing. But it didn't have to be. When it's a hometown rivalry, comparisons aren't necessary. Leave them in the spit bucket. Boxing is at its best when neighborhoods collide, and that's what happened in Pascal's one-sided decision over Lucian Bute.

Put Pascal-Bute in Atlantic City and listen for the empty echoes. But in Montreal, it was another victory for one of the best fight towns in North America, as a crowd of 20,479 was at the Bell Centre for fighters battling desperately to stay in contention. Pre-fight talk was about losses and injuries. Picking a winner was like doing an autopsy. Who was more damaged?

Pascal's victory over Bute left questions about whether he could prevail in a rematch of his loss to Carl Froch or if he'd have a chance against Adonis Stevenson, still Canada's best. For Bute, the question was whether there's anything left but retirement. But for one night, there were no questions in the roar from a crowd caught up in the drama of seeing who would win a city's bragging rights.

Pascal (29-2-1, 17 KOs) did so with athleticism that he often employed in a measured, opportunistic way. It was there, in sudden bursts, when he detected an opening.

"I knew in my heart that I was the best man in town," Pascal told members of the ringside media.

He was also a changed man. Late rounds had often been a problem for Pascal, a Haitian who has been living in Quebec for many years.

He often exhausted himself in pursuit of an early stoppage. But he broke the habit against Bute, perhaps because of guidance from Roy Jones Jr. while training in Las Vegas. Pascal practiced patience and precision. He crouched and – in the Jones style – often had his hands at his waist. He fired punches like a sniper. He didn't waste many, which was a tactic that conserved energy and seemed to disarm Bute (31-2, 24 KOs), who was tentative – almost timid – through 11 rounds.

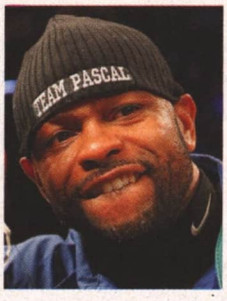
If Bute trained for a bull rush, it wasn't there as early or as often as expected. There was a theory that Bute was cautious because of surgery to remove bone chips from his left hand.

"You can't win a fight with one arm," trainer Stephan Larouche told Montreal media.

Bute's best round was the 12th. He trapped Pascal in a corner, landing jabs and left hands. But it was too late, and Pascal had too much left in a fight that, according to CompuBox, ended with him landing 37 more punches than Bute. Pascal also landed at a better rate, 43 percent to 36. On the cards, it was 118-110, 117-11 and 116-112, all for Pascal in an undisputed victory for him and his city.•

Jean Pascal (left) outclassed Lucian Bute in an all-Canadian battle.

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



ROY JONES JR. UD 12 ZINE EDDINE BENMAKHLOUF

Dec. 21, Moscow

★ There was a time when Roy Jones Jr. was known for his reluctance. It even tagged him with an unwanted nickname. "Reluctant Roy" was building a legend in those days. He was careful about who he fought. Where he fought.

The reluctance is gone. The legend is in place.

Have legend, will travel.

It took Jones (57-8, 40 KOs) to Russia, where fans know the legend from YouTube. Nobody will confuse his opponent, French cruiserweight Zine Eddine Benmakhlouf (17-4-1, 8 KOs), with James Toney. But that's not the point. The legend, like the show, must go on. And it did with familiar showmanship complemented by quick jabs and a solid left hand. The judges liked what they saw, scoring it 119-108, 118-109 and 120-108, all for Jones.

Jones, 45, also took some hard shots while resting on the ropes in late rounds. It made you wince, worry and wish that some of that reluctance would make a comeback.

NO. 5 KIKO MARTINEZ KO 9 NO. 2 JEFFREY MATHEBULA

Dec. 21, Elche, Spain

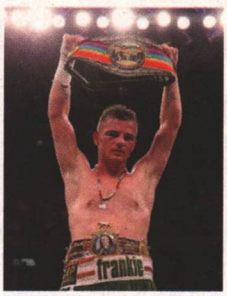
★ Kiko Martinez threw a body shot and said a prayer.

The shot landed. The prayer was answered. Jeffrey Mathebula didn't get up.

"I prayed he wouldn't," Martinez (30-4, 22 KOs) told ringside reporters after retaining the IBF's junior featherweight title with a ninth-round knockout of Mathebula (27-5-2, 14 KOs).

Mathebula appeared to have a critical advantage: Martinez is 5-foot-5; Mathebula is 5-11. At posed face-to-face stare downs, Martinez would have needed a stepladder to look directly into Mathebula's eyes. Mathebula looked down at him then. But, at the end, the South African was looking up at Martinez in defeat.

Martinez, who is promoted by middleweight champion Sergio Martinez, turned Mathebula's slender frame into a target by closing the distance. By the ninth, Martinez's punishing pursuit had worn down Mathebula and brought him within range of a shot that cut him down like a tree.



FRANKIE GAVIN D 10 BRADLEY PRYCE

Dec. 21, Leeds, England (Box Nation)

★ If Frankie Gavin's 2013 resolutions included a promise to resurrect potential eroded by personal turmoil, the welterweight succeeded. He went 4-0, ending the year by beating Bradley Pryce in a bout significant for what he hopes to do in 2014.

With his personal life in order and a perfect boxing record, Gavin looks at 2014 as a year in which he hopes to fulfill world-class aspirations. Amir Khan is at the top of his wish list.

"Khan is a big fight I want," Gavin (18-0, 12 KOs) told U.K. reporters before and after playing it safe in a 99-92 decision over Pryce (34-16, 18 KOs), who took the bout on two days' notice. "It's winnable."

Khan has other ideas, of course. Namely, Floyd Mayweather Jr. If not Khan, Gavin pointed to unbeaten Kell Brook as another possibility on an ambitious agenda.

NO.1 TAKASHI UCHIYAMA UD 12 DAIKI KANEKO

Dec. 31, Tokyo

★ Takashi Uchiyama knows how to celebrate New Year's Eve in only one way. He wins.

Uchiyama (21-0-1, 17 KOs) won for the third straight time on New Year's Eve, closing out 2013 with a unanimous decision over Daiki Kaneko.

But it wasn't easy. Uchiyama nearly woke up to 2014 without his WBA junior lightweight title and only a hangover to show for his troubles. Kaneko (19-3-3, 12 KOs), who was bleeding from a cut near his right eye and suffered from a badly swollen left eye, scored a knockdown with a right hook in a furious 10th round, a late entry for Round of the Year.

Over the final two rounds, Uchiyama survived with poise, a precise jab and counterpunches for a 117-110 victory on all three cards.

"I didn't panic," Uchiyama told reporters.

It wouldn't be New Year's Eve if he did.

NO. 7 TAKASHI MIURA TKO 9 DANTE JARDON

Dec. 31, Tokyo

★ A rematch and a rare moment in Japanese history are possibilities after Takashi Miura retained his WBC junior lightweight title with a stoppage of Dante Jardon and Takashi Uchiyama followed by outpointing Daiki Kaneko to retain his WBC crown.

Takashi vs. Takashi II has been speculated ever since the two met in January 2011. Uchiyama won by a TKO after the bout was stopped in the eighth round because of a cut suffered by Miura (27-2-2, 20 KOs). Before the stoppage, Miura made it interesting with a third-round knockdown of Uchiyama. Unification fights don't happen often anywhere. It hasn't happened in Japan since Kazuto Ioka's 2012 victory for two pieces of the strawweight title.

Miura's power, evident against Uchiyama, was simply too much for Jardon (24-4, 20 KOs), who was floored by a left in the fifth and was finished at 55 seconds of the ninth.

NO. 3 KAZUTO IOKA UD 12 NO. 7 FELIX ALVARADO

Dec 31, Osaka, Japan

★ Kazuto Ioka took a significant step toward a potential blockbuster by ending 2013 with the third defense of the WBA junior flyweight title he won on the last day of 2012.

In the wake of his thorough decision win over the formerly unbeaten Felix Alvarado (18-1, 15 KOs) there's mounting talk about Ioka (14-0, 9 KOs) against 108- and 112-pound kingpin Roman Gonzalez in what could be the biggest Lord of the Flies showdown since Mike Carbajal-Humberto Gonzalez.

Against Alvarado, Ioka took control in the early rounds. His sharp punches left the Nicaraguan with a nasty welt near his left eye, which the ringside physician examined twice – before the fourth and after the ninth. The latter was Alvarado's best round. But he had no real counter for Ioka's right hand, which scored repeatedly in a 119-109, 119-110, 115-113 victory on the judges' cards.

FAHLEEN SAKKREERIN JR. KO 3 RYO MIYAZAKI

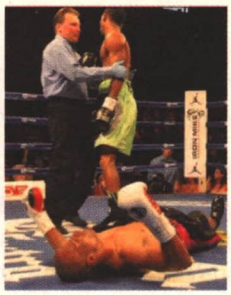
Dec. 31, Osaka, Japan

★ A sure sign that an upset was imminent occurred at the weigh-in before Fahleen Sakkreerin Jr.-Ryo Miyazaki. Miyazaki collapsed.

It's not clear whether Miyazaki was ill or weakened in a struggle to make 108 pounds for his first junior flyweight bout since vacating his strawweight title because he could no longer get down to 105. Despite the scary moment, the Japanese Boxing Commission let the fight go on.

But Miyazaki (20-1-3, 11 KOs) entered the ring looking depleted – without energy or hope – against Sakkreerin (23-2, 15 KOs), the son of Thailand's popular 105-pound champion in the early 1990s.

Sakkreerin walked through Miyazaki, finishing him off in the third, first with a sweeping right hand and then a combination that put him on the canvas and kept him there at 2:22 of the round.



RANCES BARTHELEMY KO 2 NO. 4 ARGENIS MENDEZ

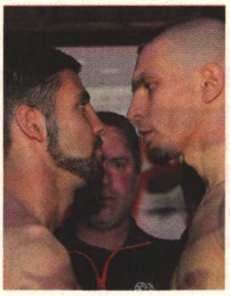
Jan. 3, Minneapolis (ESPN2)

★ It was a major upset. A major controversy, too.

Rances Barthelemy dropped Argenis Mendez twice in what was ruled a second-round knockout for the IBF's junior lightweight title. But the KO blows appeared to land after the bell.

Referee Pete Podgorski was in a neutral corner, not close enough to intervene. Three seconds after the bell rang, it looked as if Barthelemy (20-0, 13 KOs) threw the critical punch, a left. Only then did Podgorksi step in with a 10-count over a prone Mendez (21-3-1, 11 KOs). Barthelemy thought he had a KO and a major crown. Not so fast.

Mendez promoter Mike Tyson hired attorney Pat English, who filed an appeal with Minnesota and the IBF, asking that the result be ruled a no-contest and the title returned to Mendez. English was also seeking a rematch at press time, but Mendez might not want one. He never had a chance.



IVAN REDKACH UD 10 TONY LUIS

Jan. 17, Memphis (Showtime)

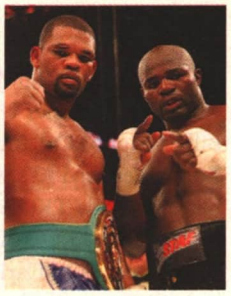
★ Ivan Redkach likes to call himself the Mexican Ukrainian. It's an unlikely combo. A little like salsa and a shot of vodka. But the potential is potent, and that's been evident in Redkach's steady emergence, which continued with a decision over Tony Luis in a lightweight bout.

For the first time, Redkach (16-0, 13 KOs) showed he has enough stubborn stuff to go the distance. He went 10 rounds, knocking down Luis (17-2, 7 KOs) once, to score a 99-90, 97-93, 97-92 victory on the scorecards.

"I went 10 rounds against my toughest opponent," Redkach told ringside reporters. He now appears to be three or four fights away from a chance at a world title. Then, he says, he wants to fight Yuriorkis Gamboa.

"I firmly believe I can knock Gamboa out," he told RingTV.com.

That salsa-vodka cocktail includes a shot of confidence, too.



MIKE PEREZ MD 10 CARLOS TAKAM

Jan. 18, Montreal (HBO)

★ Mike Perez wanted to be a heavyweight contender. He still does.

His hopes stalled with a majority draw against Carlos Takam.

Perez (20-0-1 12 KOs) was fighting for the first time since a decision over Magomed Abdusalamov, who was in a medically-induced coma for head trauma sustained in the December bout. Abdusalamov is now in rehabilitation.

It's not clear how much Perez was affected by injuries that put Abdusalamov's life in jeopardy. But his thoughts were with him. Perez wore "Mago" on his trunks. He planned to give Abdusalamov's family some of his purse.

It's also clear Perez was bothered by a head butt that resulted in a cut, which bled into his right eye. In the 10th, Takam (29-1-1, 23 KOs) scored just enough for a 95-95, 95-95, 96-94 standoff with pressure punctuated by a right that staggered Perez.

JONES/PEREZ: HERBY WAYNE; MARTINEZ: RICH SCHULTZ/GETTY IMAGES; GAVIN: SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES; UCHIYAMA: MIURA: TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; IOKA: JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH FIGHTS OF JAN. 19 (CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Christian Hammer UD 10 Kevin Johnson
Billy Wright KO 1 Ricky Torrez
Zoltan Petranyi KO 3 Tibor Balogh
Lateef Kayode TKO 6 Jonte Willis
Oscar Rivas TKO 3 Shawn Cox
Mike Perez D 10 Carlos Takam

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Nuri Seferi DQ 7 Steve Herelius
Roy Jones Jr. UD 12 Zine Eddine Benmakhlouf
Taylor Mabika TKO 7 Prince George Akrong
Victor Ramirez UD 10 Mariano Diaz Strunz

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Eleider Alvarez UD 10 Andrew Gardiner
Jean Pascal UD 12 Lucian Bute

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Przemyslaw Opalach TKO 2 Maisha Samson
Samy Anouche TKO 4 Attila Palko

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Ronny Mittag UD 12 Mikheil Khutsishvili
Marcos Reyes TKO 3 Isaac Mendez
Dmitry Chudinov TKO 6 Juan Camilo Novoa
Adrian Luna Flores TKO 2 Ulises Jimenez
Caleb Truax D 10 Ossie Duran

Heavyweight contender Mike Perez (right) was lucky to emerge with a draw against Carlos Takam on Jan. 18.

Antoine Douglas UD 8 Marquis Davis

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Jason Welborn TKO 8 Terry Carruthers
Ferdinand Pilz TKO 4 Istvan Kiss
Frankie Gavin W 10 Bradley Pryce
Sasha Yengoyan KO 7 Igor Faniyan
Ramon Alvarez TKO 2 Gilberto Hernandez
Frank Galarza KO 2 John Thompson

WELTERWEIGHTS

Jose Zepeda KO 3 Emanuel Lopez
Pablo Munguia UD 10 Samuel Vargas
Dan Nazareno Jr. TKO 2 Eusebio Baluarte
Lanardo Tyner TKO 12 Angel Hernandez
Teerachai Kratingdaenggym KO 1 Fernando Castaneda
Mikael Zewski TKO 7 Krzysztof Szot

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Juan Manuel Witt KO 2 Oscar Ulises Lopez
Amir Imam KO 1 Sergio Perez
Michele Di Rocco UD 12 Ville Piispanen
Viktor Postol UD 10 Behzod Nabiev
Zahir Raheem UD 10 Bayan Jargal
Abner Lopez SD 10 Humberto Gutierrez
Antonio DeMarco TKO 2 Jesus Gurrola
(F) Ana Laura Esteche UD 10 Monica Acosta

LIGHTWEIGHTS

(F) Maria Maderna UD 10 Diana Ayala
Fernando Carcamo TKO 2 Sergio Rivera
Eduard Troyanovsky TKO 2 Allan Kamote
Richard Commey TKO 8 Prince Ofotsu
Roman Reinoso TKO 8 Isaias Santos Sampaio
Masayoshi Nakatani MD 12 Yoshitaka Kato
Marcelino Nicolas Lopez TKO 3 Sidney Siqueira
Yvan Mendy UD 10 Sylvain Chapelle
Ivan Redkach UD 10 Tony Luis

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Hiroshige Osawa TKO 9 Tetsuya Nishinaga
Ronald Pontillas TD 5 Leonardo Doronio
Takashi Uchiyama UD 12 Daiki Kaneko
Takashi Miura TKO 9 Dante Jardon
Rances Barthelemy KO 2 Argenis Mendez
Terdsak Kokietgym UD 12 Mark Sales
Juan Antonio Rodriguez MD 8 Yenifel Vicente
Nery Saguilan UD 10 Adones Aguelo

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Rikiya Fukuhara UD 8 Masaaki Serie
Leonilo Miranda TKO 4 Ulises Perez
Oleg Malinovskiy TKO 3 Nikoloz Berkatsashvili
Virgil Puton TKO 4 Richard Olisa
Alexander Miskirtchian MD 12 Sofiane Takoucht
Yukinori Oguni TKO 8 Yuki Fujimoto

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Alexis Kabore UD 12 Reynaldo Cajina
Mike Tawatchai KO 2 Yoichi Oguma
Rey Vargas UD 10 Ernie Sanchez
Arturo Santos Reyes UD 10 Jesus Acosta
Kiko Martinez KO 9 Jeffrey Mathebula
Fonluang Kokietgym TKO 2 Budi Risky
Jorge Lara MD 10 Jairo Hernandez
Horacio Garcia TKO 1 Fernando Lumacad

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Stuart Hall UD 12 Vusi Malinga
Ratchasak Kokietgym KO 2 Panca Silaban
Anthony Settoul TKO 1 Rodrigo Bracco
Tepparith Singwancha TKO 2 Ricky Manufoe
Petch Sor Chitpattana UD 10 Xian Wei Qian
Yoan Boyeaux KO 2 Benjamin Alcides Cantero
Alie Laurel TKO 5 Tiger Tor Buamas
Alejandro Hernandez UD 12 Isao Gonzalo Carranza
Tomas Rojas KO 8 Vergel Nebran
Sonny Boy Jaro KO 1 Marzon Cabilla
(F) Carolina Rodriguez UD 10 Simone Da Silva Duarte
Sebastien Gauthier D 8 Javier Franco

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

(F) Debora Dionicius UD 10 Guadalupe Martinez
Omar Narvaez TKO 7 David Carmona
Petchbarngborn Kokietgym KO 2 Jemmy Gobel
Carlos Cuadras TKO 2 Songseanglek Phosuwangym
(F) Daniela Bermudez TKO 8 Linda Laura Lecca
David Sanchez KO 4 Marco Demecillo
Felipe Orucuta TKO 10 Gabriel Pena

FLYWEIGHTS

(F) Shindo Go UD 10 Judith Rodriguez
Jason Canoy KO 1 Aroel Romasasa

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Thabiso Moorosi TKO 4 Mfundo Gwayana
Kazuto Ioka UD 12 Felix Alvarado
Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr. KO 3 Ryo Miyazaki
Ganigan Lopez UD 12 Mario Rodriguez
Ramon Garcia Hirales W 12 Lionel Duran

STRAWWEIGHTS

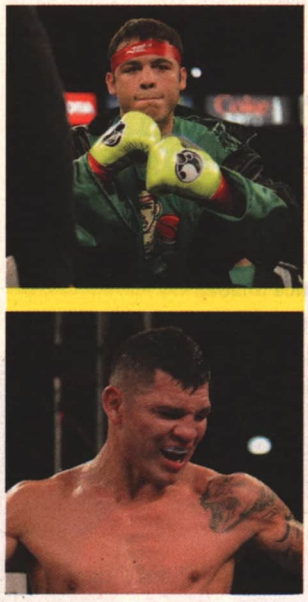
Wanheng Menayothin UD 6 Madit Sada
Jesus Silvestre W 6 Jesus Reyes
Samartlek Chaiyonggym UD 12 Jimmy Masangkay
Go Odaira UD 10 Masashi Tada

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

MARCH

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR. VS. BRYAN VERA II

March 1, Alamodome, San Antonio



Division: Super middleweights

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★

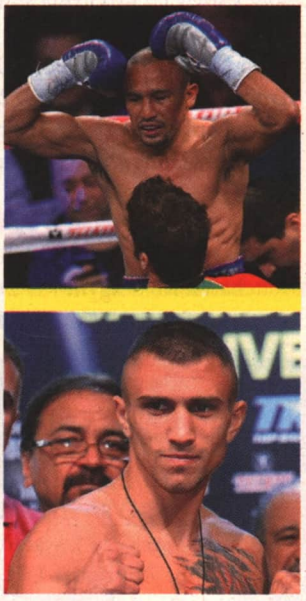
Also fighting: Orlando Salido vs. Vasyl Lomachenko, featherweights (for Salido's WBO title); Juan Diaz vs. Gerardo Robles, lightweights

Significance: Some believe a listless Chavez (47-1-1, 32 KOs) was given a gift decision in his first fight against Vera, before which Chavez battled his weight. We presume he'll be better prepared this time. Vera (23-7, 14 KOs), a true pro with limited ability, will definitely be ready.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Chavez KO 9; Fischer – Chavez UD; Satterfield – Chavez KO 10.

ORLANDO SALIDO VS. VASYL LOMACHENKO

March 1, Alamodome, San Antonio



Division: Featherweights (for Salido's WBO title)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

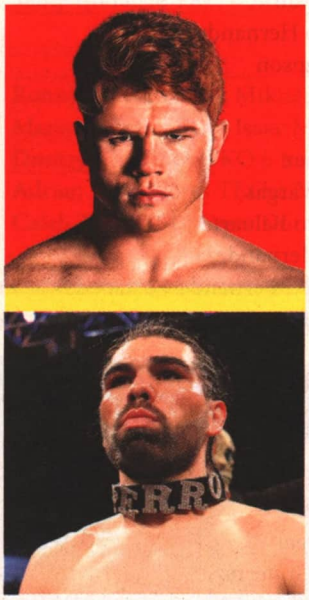
Also fighting: Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Bryan Vera, super middleweights

Significance: The story here is about the immensely talented challenger. Lomachenko (7-0) will be fighting for a major title after just seven pro fights, including six with the World Series of Boxing. Salido (40-12-2, 28 KOs) isn't as skillful as his foe but is a hardened veteran who won't go easily.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Lomachenko UD; Fischer – Lomachenko MD; Satterfield – Lomachenko SD.

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. ALFREDO ANGULO

March 8, MGM Grand, Las Vegas



Division: Junior middleweights

TV: Showtime Pay-Per-View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

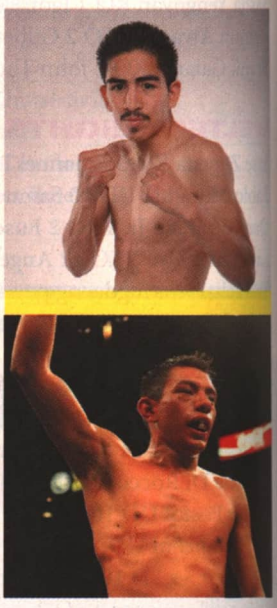
Also fighting: Leo Santa Cruz vs. Cristian Mijares, junior featherweights (for Santa Cruz's WBC title); Carlos Molina vs. Jermall Charlo, junior middleweights (for Molina's IBF title); Omar Figueroa vs. Ricardo Alvarez, lightweights.

Significance: Alvarez (42-1-1, 30 KOs) lost to Floyd Mayweather Jr. in September, the Mexican's first setback. No shame in that. He faces a much more beatable foe in the tough, hard-punching Angulo (22-3, 18 KOs), who is coming off a solid performance against Erislandy Lara.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Alvarez KO 9; Fischer – Alvarez KO 10; Satterfield – Alvarez UD 12.

LEO SANTA CRUZ VS. CRISTIAN MIJARES

March 8, MGM Grand, Las Vegas



Division: Junior featherweights (for Santa Cruz's WBC title)

TV: Showtime Pay-Per-View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★

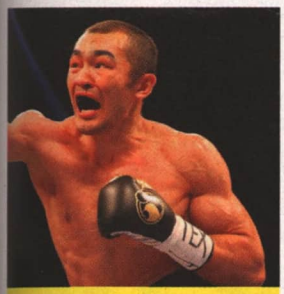
Also fighting: Canelo Alvarez vs. Alfredo Angulo, junior middleweights; Omar Figueroa vs. Ricardo Alvarez, lightweights

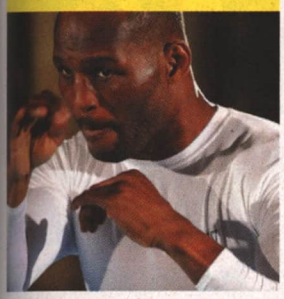
Significance: No one has been able to withstand the relentless pressure applied by Santa Cruz (26-0-1, 15 KOs), one of the hottest fighters in the business. Mijares (49-7-2, 24 KOs) is a skillful former 115-pound titleholder but might not have the physical strength to hold off Santa Cruz.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Santa Cruz KO 6; Fischer – Santa Cruz UD; Satterfield – Santa Cruz KO 9.

BEIBUT SHUMENOV VS. **BERNARD HOPKINS**

March 29 (or April 19), Barclays Center, Brooklyn, N.Y. (or Alamodome, San Antonio)





Division: Light heavyweights (title unification)

TV: Showtime

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★

Significance: Hopkins (54-6-2, 32 KOs) recently turned 49 but continues to roll along. Shumenov (14-1, 9 KOs) is inexperienced and somewhat crude, which seems to make him an ideal foil for this version of Hopkins. The date and site of the fight had not been finalized by press time.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Hopkins UD; Fischer – Hopkins UD; Satterfield – Hopkins SD.

MARCH 1 – Robert Stieglitz vs. Arthur Abraham, super middleweights (for Stieglitz's WBO title), Magdeburg, Germany.

MARCH 1 – Ricky Burns vs. Terence Crawford, lightweights (for Burns' WBO title), Glasgow, Scotland (AWE).

MARCH 1 – Paul Butler vs. Diego Luis Pichardo Liriano, junior bantamweights, Liverpool, England.

MARCH 7 – Rustam Nugaev vs. Marvin Quintero, lightweights, Pala, Calif. (ESPN2)

MARCH 8 – Yoan Pablo Hernandez vs. Pawel Kolodziej, cruiserweights (for Hernandez's RING and IBF titles), Berlin.

MARCH 15 – Danny Garcia vs. Mauricio Herrera, junior welterweights (for Garcia's RING, WBC and WBA titles), Puerto Rico (Showtime)

MARCH 15 – Tomasz Adamek vs. Vyacheslav Glazkov, heavyweights, Bethlehem, Pa. (NBA Sports Net).

MARCH 15 – Richar Abril vs. Eduard Troyanovsky, lightweights (for Abril's WBA title), Moscow.

MARCH 15 – Tony Bellew vs. Valery Brudov, cruiserweights, Liverpool, England.

MARCH 22 – Erik Morales vs. Jorge Paez Jr., welterweights, Monterrey, Mexico.

MARCH 22 – Odlanier Solis vs. Tony Thompson, heavyweights, Turkey.

MARCH 26 – Denkaosen Kaovichit vs. Kohei Kono, junior bantamweights, Tokyo.

APRIL

MANNY PACQUIAO VS. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY II**

April 12, MGM Grand, Las Vegas

Division: Welterweights

TV: HBO Pay-Per-View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★ ★ ★ ★

Significance: Pacquiao (55-5-2, 38 KOs) lost a controversial decision to Bradley (31-0, 12 KOs) in June 2012 and then was stopped by Juan Manuel Marquez. He bounced back by outpointing Brandon Rios, but Bradley, coming off an impressive victory over Marquez, is a much sterner test.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Pacquiao UD; Fischer – Draw; Satterfield – Bradley MD.

APRIL 4 – Marco Antonio Rubio vs. Domenico Spada, middleweights, Mexico

APRIL 5 – Juergen Braehmer vs. TBA, light heavyweights, Rostock, Germany. No opponent had been announced at press time.

MAY

MAY 3 – Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. TBA, welterweights (for Mayweather's RING and WBC titles), Las Vegas (Showtime Pay-Per-View). Note: Numerous reports indicated at press time that Mayweather will fight Amir Khan but no formal announcement had been made.

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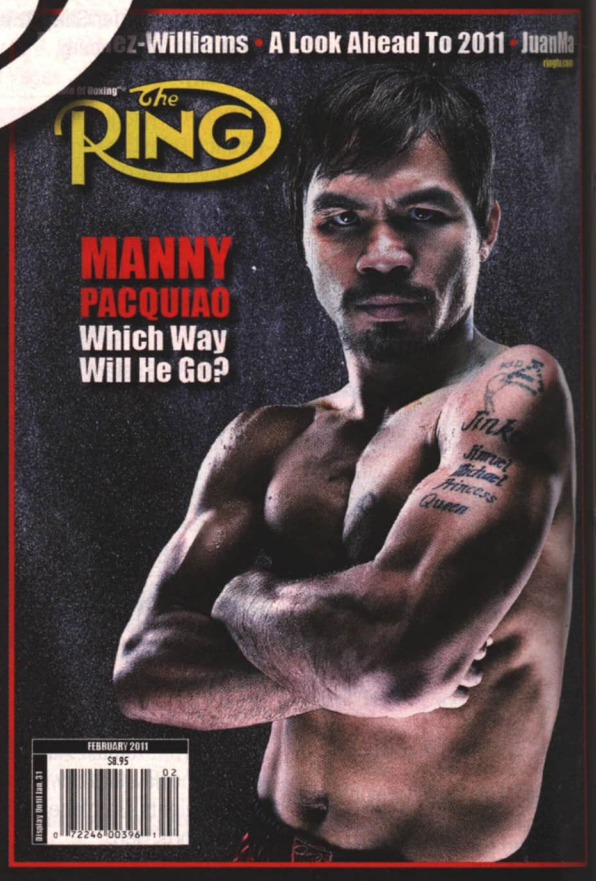

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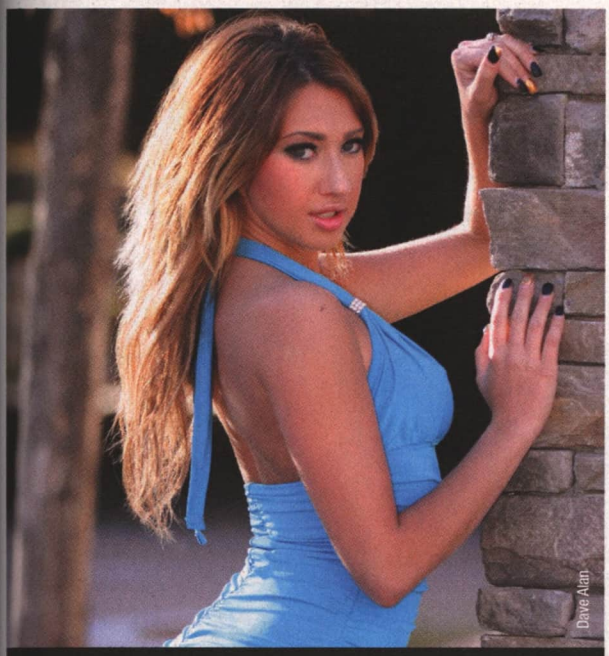
BY HEATHER SHANHOLTZ



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the RING ARCHIVE

Wilfredo Gomez (right) of Puerto Rico was on one of the more remarkable runs in boxing history when he faced Derrik Holmes in the summer of 1980. Gomez drew in his pro debut and then proceeded to knock out his next 32 opponents, including Holmes, who went down a remarkable eight times before the fight was finally stopped in the fifth round. Fellow Hall of Famer Carlos Zarate of Mexico was also one of those 32 victims in a much-hyped fight. The 33rd opponent was Zarate's great countryman Salvador Sanchez, who avenged his nation's honor by stopping Gomez in eight rounds in 1981. Gomez would then go 12-2 the remainder of his career and retire as one of Puerto Rico's greatest boxing heroes.

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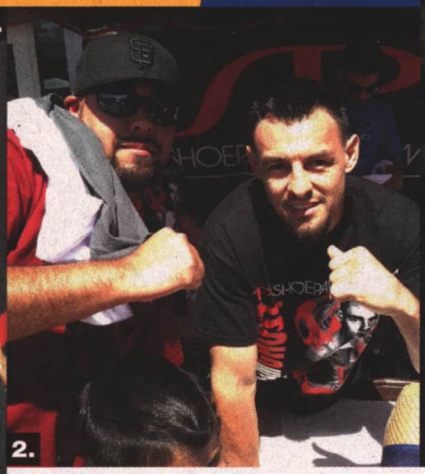
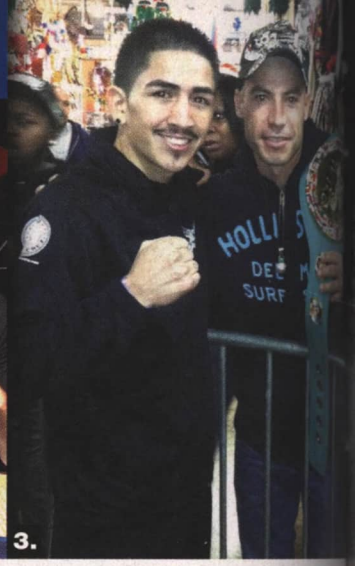
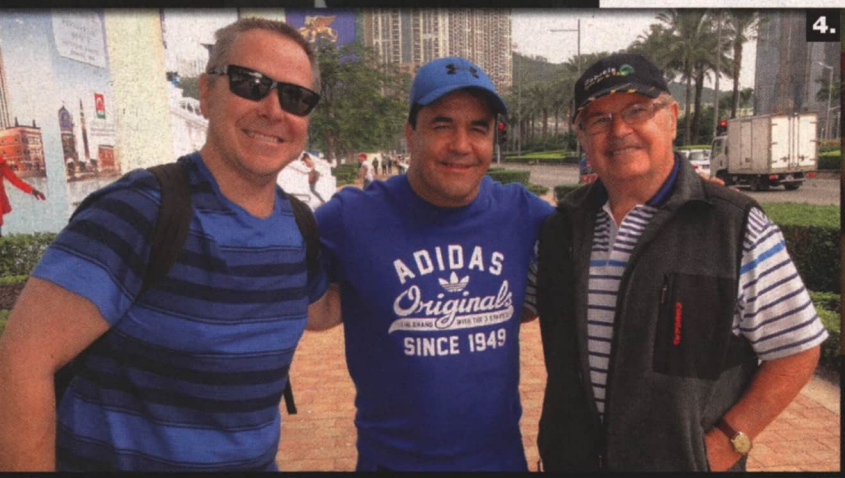
Corona Extra BOXING

AT THE FIGHTS





1. Basilio Diaz (right) with Andre Ward at the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Canelo Alvarez show in Las Vegas. **2.** Robert Niebla (left) with Robert Guerrero on Robert Guerrero Day in Gilroy, Calif. **3.** Eduardo Castillo (right) with Leo Santa Cruz at the Marcos Maidana-Adrien Broner card in San Antonio. **4.** Jim Micsko Jr. (left) and Jim Micsko Sr. flank Hall of Famer Jeff Fenech before the Manny Pacquiao-Brandon Rios fight in Macau. **5.** Joe Thielen (right) with Mike Tyson at the Argenis Mendez-Rances Barthelemy card in Minneapolis. **6.** Mark McCloud (center) with Guillermo Rigondeaux (left) and Joel Casamayor at the Rigondeaux-Joseph Agbeko show in Atlantic City, N.J. **7.** Ron (second from left) and David Goldman are flanked by Angel Garcia (left) and Danny Garcia in Brooklyn, N.Y.



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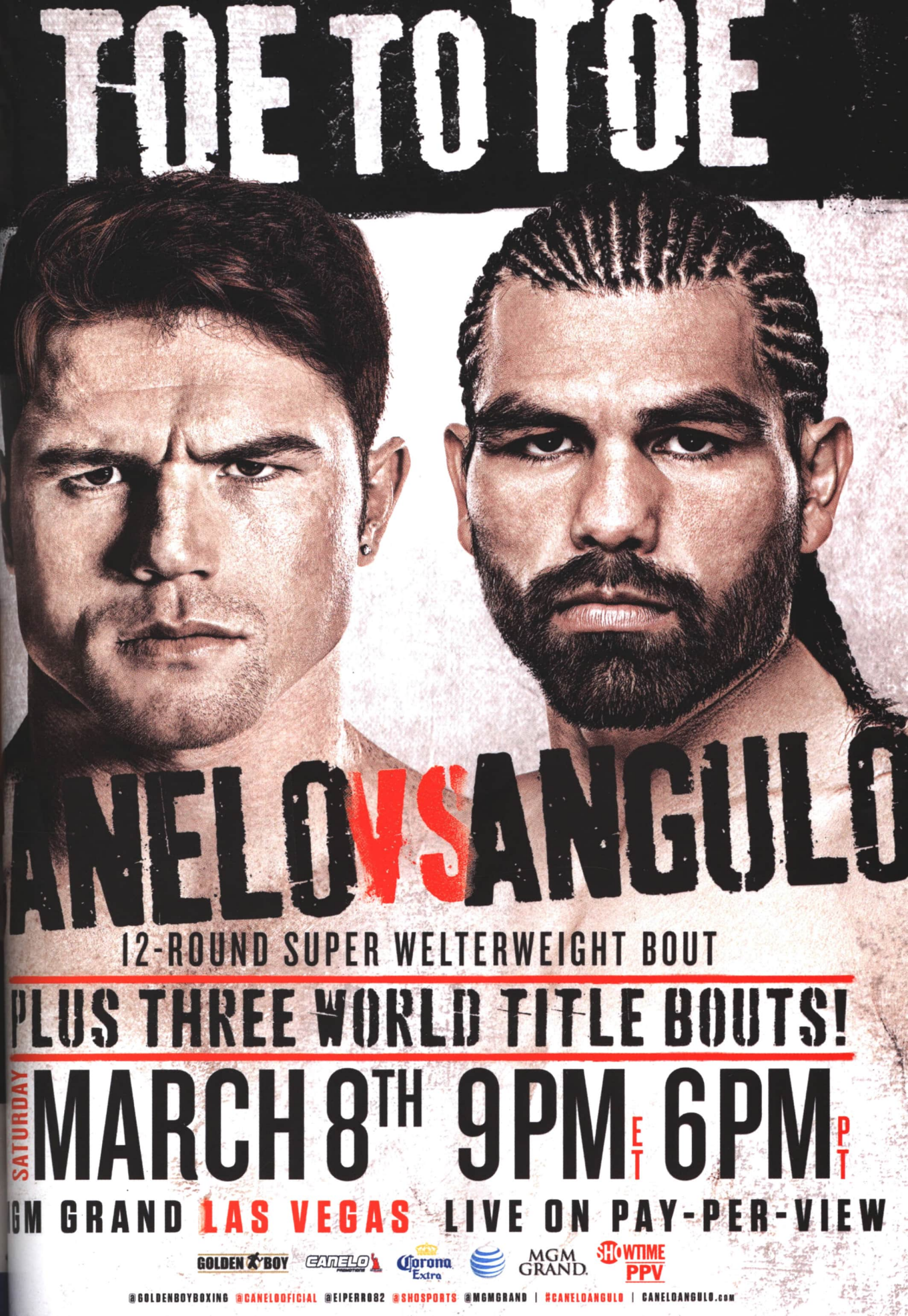
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